

THE INCONSTANT;

OR,

The Way to win Him.

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY GEORGE FARQUHAR, ESQ.



CORRECTLY GIVEN,
AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL
With Remarks.



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REMARKS.



THIS lively and entertaining comedy was first acted at Drury Lane, in 1702. In his preface, the author observes, that he took the *hint* from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Wild Goose Chase*, though, in fact, the main plot and several entire scenes were borrowed from that eccentric piece.

The catastrophe of the last act, where *Young Mirabel* is delivered from the bravoes by the care of *Oriana*, disguised as his page, was supposed to owe its origin to a similar affair, in which Farquhar himself had some concern when on military duty in France, where the scene is laid.

There are still some over-wrought passages in this play, and some improbabilities, almost beyond the pale of that license so liberally allowed to works of imagination : it is still, however, a great favourite.

The inimitable performance of *Bisarre*, by ~~Mr~~ Jordan, and of *Duretête*, by Mr. John Bannister, will long be remembered with delight.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Drury Lane, 1814. Covent Garden, 1712.

Old Mirabel .. Mr. Downton ... Mr. Shuter. —
Y. Mirabel ... Mr. Elliston ... Mr. Smith.
Duretête Mr. Bannister .. Mr. Woodward.
Dugard Mr. Holland ... Mr. Gardner.
Petit Mr. Fisher Mr. Cushing.

Oriana Miss Boyce ... Mrs. Lessingham.
Bizarre Mrs. Edwin ... Miss Macklin.
Lamorce Mrs. Scott Mrs. Dyer.

*Ladies, Gentlemen, Bravoes, Soldiers, Servants, and
Attendants.*

THE INCONSTANT.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. THE STREET.

Enter Dugard, and his man Petit, in riding habits.

Dug. SIRRAH, what's a clock?

Pet. Turned of eleven, sir.

Dug. No more! We have rid a swinging pace from Nemour's since two this morning! Petit, run to Rousseau's, and bespeak a dinner at a louis-d'or a head, to be ready by one.

Pet. How many will there be of you, sir?

Dug. Let me see: Mirabel one, Durétête two, myself three——

Pet. And I four.

Dug. How now, sir! at your old travelling familiarity! When abroad, you had some freedom for want of better company; but, among my friends at Paris, pray remember your distance—Be gone, sir —[*exit Petit*] This fellow's wit was necessary abroad, but he's too cunning for a domestic; I must dispose of him some way else.—Who's here? Old Mirabel and my sister! my dearest sister!

Enter Old Mirabel and Oriana.

Ori. My brother! Welcome.

Dug. Monsieur Mirabel! I'm heartily glad to see you.

O. Mir. Honest Mr. Dugard, by the blood of the Mirabels, I'm your most humble servant.

Dug. Why, sir, you've cast your skin sure, you're brisk and gay, lusty health about you, no sign of age but your silver hairs.

O. Mir. Silver hairs! Then they are quicksilver hafts, sir. Whilst I have golden pockets, let my hairs be silver as they will. Adsbud, sir, I can dance, and sing, and drink, and—no, I can't wench. But, Mr. Dugard, no news of my son Bob, in all your travels?

Dug. Your son's come home, sir.

O. Mir. Come home! Bob come home! By the blood of the Mirabels, Mr. Dugard, what say ye?

Orie. Mr. Mirabel returned, sir?

Dug. He's certainly come, and you may see him within this hour or two.

O. Mir. Swear it, Mr. Dugard, presently swear it.

Dug. Sir, he came to town with me this morning; I left him at the Bagnieurs, being a little disordered after riding, and I shall see him again presently.

O. Mir. What! and he was ashamed to ask a blessing with his boots on. A nice dog! Well, and how fares the young rogue, ha?

Dug. A fine gentleman, sir. He'll be his own messenger.

O. Mir. A fine gentleman! But is the rogue like me still?

Dug. Why yes, sir; he's very like his mother, and as like you as most modern sons are to their fathers.

O. Mir. Why, sir, don't you think that I begat him?

Dug. Why yes, sir; you married his mother, and he inherits your estate. He's very like you, upon my word.

Ori. And pray, brother, what's become of his honest companion, Duretête ?

Dug. Who, the captain ? The very same he went abroad ; he's the only Frenchman I ever knew that could not change. Your son, Mr. Mirabel, is more obliged to nature for that fellow's composition than for his own : for he's more happy in Duretête's folly than his own wit. In short, they are as inseparable as finger and thumb ; but the first instance in the world, I believe, of opposition in friendship.

O. Mir. Very well ; will he be home to dinner, think ye ?

Dug. Sir, he has ordered me to bespeak a dinner for us at Rousseau's, at a louis-d'or a head.

O. Mir. A louis-d'or a head ! Well said, Bob ; by the blood of the Mirabels, Bob's improved. But Mr. Dugard, was it so civil of Bob to visit monsieur Rousseau before his own natural father, eh ? Hark-ye, Oriana, what think you of a fellow that can eat and drink ye a whole louis-d'or at a sitting ? He must be as strong as Hercules, life and spirit in abundance. Before Gad, I don't wonder at these men of quality, that their own wives can't serve 'em. A louis-d'or a head ! tis enough to stock the whole nation with bastards, 'tis faith. Mr. Dugard, I leave you with your sister. [exit.]

Dug. Well, sister, I need not ask you how you do, your looks resolve me ; fair, tall, well-shaped : you're almost grown out of my remembrance.

Ori. Why truly, brother, I look pretty well, thank nature and my toilet ; I eat three meals a day, am very merry when up, and sleep soundly when I'm down.

Dug. But, sister, you remember that upon my going abroad you would choose this old gentleman for your guardian ; he's no more related to our fa-

mily than Prester John, and I have no reason to think you mistrusted my management of your fortune: therefore, pray be so kind as to tell me without reservation the true cause of making such a choice.

Ori. Lookye, brother, you were going a rambling, and 'twas proper, lest I should go a rambling too, that somebody should take care of me. Old monsieur Mirabel is an honest gentleman, was our father's friend, and has a young lady in this house whose company I like, and who has chosen him for her guardian as well as I.

Dug. What, mademoiselle Bizarre?

Ori. The same; we live merrily together, without scandal or reproach; we make much of the old gentleman between us, and he takes care of us; we eat what we like, go to bed when we please, rise when we will, all the week we dance and sing, and upon Sundays go first to church, and then to the play.—Now, brother, besides these motives for choosing this gentleman for my guardian, perhaps I had some private reasons.

Dug. Not so private as you imagine, sister; your love to young Mirabel is no secret, I can assure you; but so public that all your friends are ashamed on't.

Ori. O my word then, my friends are very bashful; though I'm afraid, sir, that those people are not ashamed enough at their own crimes, who have so many blushes to spare for the faults of their neighbours.

Dug. Ay, but, sister, the people say——

Ori. Pshaw, hang the people; their court of inquiry is a tavern, and their informer claret: they think as they drink, and swallow reputations like loches: a lady's health goes briskly round with the glass, but her honour is lost in the toast.

Dug. Ay ; but, sister, there is still something——

Ori. If there be something, brother, 'tis none of the people's something ; marriage is my thing, and I'll stick to't.

Dug. Marriage ! Young Mirabel marry ! He'll build churches sooner. Take heed, sister ; though your honour stood proof to his home bred assaults, you must keep a stricter guard for the future : he has now got the foreign air, and the Italian softness ; his wit's improved by converse, his behaviour finished by observation, and his assurances confirmed by success. Sister, I can assure you he has made his conquests ; and 'tis a plague upon your sex, to be the soonest deceived by those very men that you know have been false to others.

Ori. For heaven's sake, brother, tell me no more of his faults ; for if you do I shall run mad for him : say no more, sir ; let me but get him into the bands of matrimony, I'll spoil his wandering, I warrant him ; I'll do his business that way, never fear.

Dug. Well, sister, I won't pretend to understand the engagements between you and your lover ; I expect, when you have need of my counsel or assistance, you will let me know more of your affairs. Mirabel is a gentleman, and as far as my honour and interest can reach, you may command me to the furtherance of your happiness : In the mean time, sister, I have a great mind to make you a present of another humble servant ; a fellow that I took up at Lyons, who has served me honestly ever since.

Ori. Then why will you part with him ?

Dug. He has gained so insufferably on my good humour, that he's grown too familiar ; but the fellow's cunning, and may be serviceable to you in your affair with Mirabel. Here he comes.

Enter Petit.

Well, sir, have you been at Rousseau's?

Pet. Yes, sir, and who should I find there but Mr. Mirabel and the captain, hatching as warmly over a tub of ice, as two hen pheasants over a brood.—They would not let me bespeak any thing, for they had dined before I came.

Dug. Come, sir, you shall serve my sister; I shall still continue kind to you.—Wait on your lady home
Petit. [exit.]

Pet. A chair, a chair, a chair!

Ori. No, no, I'll walk home, 'tis but next door.

[exit.]

SCENE II. A TAVERN.

Mirabel and Duretête rise from the table.

Mir. Welcome to Paris once more, my dear captain; we have eat heartily, drank roundly, paid plentifully, and let it go for once. I liked every thing but our women, they look'd so lean and tawdry, poor creatures! 'tis a suré sign the army is not paid.—Give me the plump Venetian, brisk and sanguine, that smiles upon me like the glowing sun, and meets my lips like sparkling wine, her person shining as the glass, and spirit like the foaming liquor.

Dur. Ah, Mirabel, Italy, I want you; but for our women here in France, they are such thin brawn fallen jades.

Mir. There's nothing on this side of the Alps worth my humble service t'ye—Ha, Roma la santa! Italy for my money; their customs, gardens, buildings, paintings, music, polices, wine, and women! the paradise of the world;—not pester'd with a parcel of precise old gouty fellows, that would debar their children every pleasure that they themselves

are past the sense of: commend me to the Italian familiarity: Here, son, there's fifty crowns; go pay your girl her week's allowance.

Dur. Ay, these are your fathers for you, that understand the necessities of young men; not like our musty dads, who, because they cannot fish themselves, would muddy the water, and spoil the sport of them that can. But now you talk of the plump, what d'ye think of a Dutch woman?

Mir. A Dutch woman's too compact; nay every thing among them is so; a Dutch man is thick, a Dutch woman is squab, a Dutch horse is round, a Dutch dog is short, a Dutch ship is broad bottomed; and, in short, one would swear the whole product of the country were cast in the same mould with their cheeses.

Dur. Ay, but, Mirabel, you have forgot the English ladies.

Mir. The women of England were excellent, did they not take such insufferable pains to ruin what nature has made so incomparably well. But come, Duretôte, let us mind the business in hand; mistresses we must have, and must take up with the manufacture of the place, and upon a competent diligence we shall find those in Paris shall match the Italians from top to toe.

Dur. Ay, Mirabel, you will do well enough, but what will become of your friend? you know I am so plaguy bashful, so naturally an ass upon these occasions, that—

Mir. Pshaw, you must be bolder, man: travel three years, and bring home such a baby as bashfulness! A great lusty fellow! and a soldier! fie upon it.

• *Dur.* Lookye, sir, I can visit, and can ogle a little—as thus, or thus now—but if they chance to give me a forbidding look, as some women, you know,

have a devilish cast with their eyes—or if they cry—what d'ye mean? what d'ye take me for? Fie, sir, remember who I am, sir—A person of quality to be used at this rate! 'Egad, I'm struck as flat as a frying-pan.

Mir. Words o'course! never mind 'em: turn you about upon your heel with a jantée air; hum out the end of an old song; cut a cross caper, and at her again.

Dur. (*imitates him*) No, hang it, 'twill never do—Oons, what did my father mean by sticking me up in an university, or to think that I should gain any thing by my head, in a nation whose genius lies all in their heels?—Well, if ever I come to have children of my own, they shall have the education of the country; they shall learn to dance before they can walk, and be taught to sing before they can speak.

Mir. Come, come, throw off that childish humour; put on assurance, there's no avoiding it; stand all hazards, thou'rt a stout lusty fellow, and hast a good estate; look bluff, Hector, you have a good side-box face, a pretty impudent face; so, that's pretty well.—This fellow went abroad like an ox, and is returned like an ass. (*aside.*)

Dur. Let me see now how I look. (*pulls out a pocket-glass, and looks on't*) A side-box face, say you?—'Egad, I don't like it, Mirabel.—Fie, sir, don't abuse your friends, I could not wear such a face for the best countess in Christendom.

Mir. Why can't you, blockhead, as well as I?

Dur. Why, thou hast impudence to set a good face upon any thing; I would chaffge half my gold for half thy brass, with all my heart. Who comes here? Odso, Mirabel, your father!

Enter Old Mirabel.

O. Mir. Where's Bob? dear Bob!

Mir. Your blessing, sir.

O. Mir. My blessing! Damn ye, ye young rogue; why did not you come to see your father first, sirrah? My dear boy, I am heartily glad to see thee, my dear child, faith—Captain Duretête, by the blood of the Mirabels, I'm yours—well, my lads, ye look bravely, faith.—Bob, hast got any money left?

Mir. Not a farthing, sir.

O. Mir. Why, then I won't gi' thee a souse.

Mir. I did but jest, here's ten pistoles.

O. Mir. Why, then here's ten more; I love to be charitable to those that don't want it:—Well, and now d'ye like Italy, my boys?

Mir. O the garden of the world, sir; Rome, Naples, Venice, Milan, and a thousand others—all fine.

O. Mir. Ay, say you so? and they say, that Chiari is very fine to.

Dur. Indifferent, sir, very indifferent; a very curvy air; the most unwholesome to a French constitution in the world.

Mir. Pshaw, nothing on't; these rascally gazetteers have misinformed you.

O. Mir. Misinformed me! Oons, sir, were not we beaten there?

Mir. Beaten, sir! the French beaten!

O. Mir. Why, how was it, pray, sweet sir?

Mir. Sir, the captain will tell you.

Dur. No, sir, your son will tell you.

Mir. The captain was in the action, sir.

Dur. Your son saw more than I, sir, for he was a looker on.

O. Mir. Confound you both for a brace of cowards: there are no Germans to overhear you; why don't ye tell me how it was?

Mir. Why, then you must know, that we marched up a body of the finest, bravest, well-dressed

fellows in the universe; our commanders at the head of us, all lace and feather, like so many beaux at a ball—I don't believe there was a man of 'em but could dance a charmer, morbleau.

O. Mir. Dance! very well, pretty fellows, faith!

Mir. We capered up to their very trenches, and there saw peeping over a parcel of scarecrow, olive-coloured, gunpowder fellows, as ugly as the devil.

Bur. 'Egad I shall never forget the looks of them while I have breath to fetch.

Mir. They were so civil indeed as to welcome us with their cannon; but for the rest, we found them such unmannerly, rude, unsociable dogs, that we grew tired of their company, and so we even danced back again.

O. Mir. And did ye all come back?

Mir. No, two or three thousand of us stayed behind.

O. Mir. Why, Bob, why?

Mir. Pshaw—because they could not come that night.—But come, sir, we were talking of something else: pray how does your lovely charge, the fair Oriana?

O. Mir. Ripe, sir, just ripe; you'll find it better engaging with her than with the Germans, let me tell you. And what would you say, my young Mars, if I had a Venus for thee too? Come, Bob, your apartment is ready, and pray let your friend be my guest too; you shall command the house between ye, and I'll be as merry as the best of you. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I. OLD MIRABEL'S HOUSE.

*Enter Oriana and Bizarre.**Bis.* And you love this young rake, d'y'e*Ori.* Yes.*Bis.* In spite of all his ill usage?*Ori.* I can't help it.*Bis.* What's the matter wi'yc?*Ori.* Pshaw!*Bis.* O, hang all your Cassandras and Cleopatras for me.—Pr'ythee mind your airs, modes, and fashions; your stays, gowns, and feathers.*Ori.* Pr'ythee be quiet, Bizarre; you know I can be as mad as you when this Mirabel is out of my head.*Bis.* I warrant now, you'll play the fool when he comes, and say you love him; eh!*Ori.* Most certainly:—I can't dissemble, Bizarre—besides, 'tis past that, we're contracted.*Bis.* Contracted! alack-a-day, poor thing. What you have changed rings, or broken an old broad-piece between you! Well, I must confess, I do love a little coquetting with all my heart! my business should be to break gold with my lover one hour, and crack my promise the next; he should find me one day with a Prayer-book in my hand, and with a play-book another; he should have my consent to buy the wedding-ring, and the next moment would laugh in his face.*Ori.* O my dear, were there no greater tie upon my heart than there is upon my conscience, I would soon throw the contract out o'doors; but the mischief on't is, I am so fond of being tied that I'm forced to be just, and the strength of my passion keeps down the inclination of my sex. But here's the old gentleman.

Enter Old Mirabel.

O. Mir. Where's my wench? where's my two little girls, eh? have a care, look to yourselves, faith, they're a coming, the travellers are a coming. Well! which of you two will be my daughter-in-law now? Bizarre, Bizarre, what say you, mad-cap? Mirabel is a pure wild fellow.

Bis. I like him the worse.

O. Mir. You lie, hussy, you like him the better, indeed you do. what say you, my t'other little Filbert, eh?

Ori. I suppose the gentleman will choose for himself, sir.

O. Mir. Why, that's discreetly said, and so he shall.

Enter Mirabel and Duretête, who salute the Ladies.

Bob, harkye, you shall marry one of the girls, sirrah.

Mir. Sir, I'll marry 'em both, if you please.

Bis. He'll find that one may serve his turn. (*aside.*

O. Mir. Both! Why, you young dog, d'ye banter me?—Come, sir, take your choice.—Duretête, you shall have your choice too; but Robin shall choose first. Come, sir, begin.

Mir. Let me see.

O. Mir. Well! which d'ye like?

Mir. Both.

O. Mir. But which will you marry?

Mir. Neither.

O. Mir. Neither—Don't make me angry now, Bob; pray don't make me angry.—Lookye, sirrah, if I don't dance at your wedding to-morrow, I shall be very glad to cry at your grave.

Mir. That's a bull, father.

O. Mir. A bull! Why how now, ungrateful sir, did I make thee a man, that thou shouldst make me a
boast

Mir. Your pardon, sir, I only meant your expression.

O. Mir. Harkye, Bob, learn better manners to your father before strangers: I won't be angry this time.—But, boys, if ever you do't again, you rascal, remember what I say. *[Exit.]*

Mir. Pshaw, what does the old fellow mean by mewing me up here with a couple of green girls? Come, Duretête, will you go?

Ori. I hope, Mr. Mirabel, you han't forgot—

Mir. No, no, madam, I han't forgot; I have brought you a thousand little Italian curiosities; I'll assure you, madam, as far as a hundred pistoles would reach, I han't forgot the least circumstance.

Ori. Sir, you misunderstand me.

Mir. Odso, the relics, madam, from Rome. I do remember now you made a vow of chastity before my departure; a vow of chastity or something like it; was it not, madam?

Ori. O, sir, I'm answered at present. *[Exit.]*

Mir. She was coming full mouth upon me with her contract—Would I might despatch t'other. *(to Dur.)*

Dur. Mirabel—that lady there, observe her, she's wondrous pretty, faith, and seems to have but few words; I like her mainly; speak to her, man, pr'ythee speak to her. *[Apart to Mirabel.]*

Mir. Madam, here's a gentleman, who declares—

Dur. Madam, don't believe him, I declare nothing—What the devil do you mean, man?

Mir. He says, madam, that you are as beautiful as an angel.

Dur. He tells a damned lie, madam; I say no such thing: are you mad, Mirabel? Why, I shall drop down with shame.

Mir. And so, madam, not doubting but your lady-

ship may like him as well as he does you, I think it proper to leave you together (*going; Dur. holds him*

Dur. Hold, hold—Why, Mirabel, friend, sure you won't be so barbarous as to leave me alone? Pr'ythee speak to her for yourself, as it were. Lord, Lord, that a Frenchman should want impudence!

Mir. You look mighty demure, madam—She's deaf, captain. (*apart to Dur.*

Dur. I had much rather have her dumb. (*apart.*

Mir. The gravity of your air, madam, promises some extraordinary fruits from your study, which moves us with curiosity to inquire the subject of your ladyship's contemplation. Not a word!

Dur. I hope in the Lord she's speechless; if she be, she's mine this moment.—Mirabel, d'y'e think a woman's silence can be natural? (*apart.*

Bis. But the forms that logicians introduce, and which proceed from simple enumeration, are doubtful, and proceed only upon admittance—

Mir. Hoity-toity! what a plague have we here? Plato in petticoats.

Dur. Ay, ay, let her go on, man; she talks in my own mother-tongue

Bis. 'Tis exposed to invalidity from a contradictory instance, looks only upon common operations, and is infinite in its termination.

Mir. Rare pedantry.

Dur. Axioms! Axioms! Self-evident principles.

Bis. Then the ideas wherewith the mind is preoccupied.—O gentlemen, I hope you'll pardon my cogitation; I was involved in a profound point of philosophy; but I shall discuss it somewhere else, being satisfied that the subject is not agreeable to you, sparks that profess the vanity of the times. [*exit.*

Mir. Go thy way, good wife Bias: do you hear, Duretête? Dost hear this starched piece of austerity?

Dur. She's mine, man; she's mine: any own talent to a T. I'll match her in dialects, faith. I was seven years at the university, man, nursed up with Barbara, C'larunts-Daru, Ferio, Baralipton. Did you ever know, man, that 'twas metaphysics made me an ass—as, faith. Had she talked a word of singing, dancing, plays, fashions, or the like, I had foundered at the first step; but as she is—Mirabel, wish me joy.

Mir. You don't mean marriage, I hope.

Dur. No, no, I am a man of more honour.

Mir. Bravely resolved, captain, now for thy credit, warm me this frozen snow-ball, 'twill be a conquest above the Alps.

Dur. But will you promise to be always near me?

Mir. Upon all occasions never less.

Dur. Why then you shall see me in two moments make an induction from my love to her hand, from her hand to her mouth, from her mouth to her heart, and so conclude in her bed, categorematic. [*exit.*]

Mir. Now the game begins, and my fool is entered.—But here comes one to spoil my sport; now shall I be teased to death with this old-fashioned contract. I should love her too, if I might do it my own way: but she'll do nothing without witness, forsooth. I wonder women can be so immodest.

Enter Oriana.

Well, madam, why d'ye follow me?

Ori. Well, sir, why do you shun me?

Mir. 'Tis my humour, madam, and I'm naturally swayed by inclination.

Ori. Have you forgot our contract, sir?

Mir. All I remember of that contract is, that it was made some three years ago, and that's enough in conscience to forget the rest on't.

Ori. 'Tis sufficient, sir, to recollect the passing of

it; for in that circumstance I presume lies the force of the obligation.

Mir. Obligations, madam, that are forced upon the will are no tie upon the conscience; I was a slave to my passion when I passed the instrument; but the recovery of my freedom makes the contract void.

Ori. Come, Mr. Mirabel, these expressions I expected from the raillery of your humour, but I hope for very different sentiments from your honour and generosity.

Mir. Lookye, madam, as for my generosity, 'tis at your service, with all my heart: I'll keep you a coach and six horses, if you please, only permit me to keep my honour to myself; for I can assure you, madam, that the thing called honour is a circumstance absolutely unnecessary in a natural correspondence between male and female; and he's a madman that lays it out, considering its scarcity, upon any such trivial occasions. There's honour required of us by our friends, and honour due to our enemies, and they return it to us again; but I never heard of a man that left an inch of his honour in a woman's keeping, that could ever get the least account on't. —Consider, madam, you have no such thing among ye, and 'tis a main point of policy to keep no faith with reprobates—thou art a pretty little reprobate, and so get thee about thy business.

Ori. Well, sir, even all this will I allow to the gayety of your temper; your travels have improved your talent of talking, but they are not of force, I hope, to impair your morals.

Mir. Morals! Why there 'tis again now—I tell thee, child, there is not the least occasion for morals in any business between you and I—Don't you know, that of all commerce in the world there is no such cozenage and deceit as in the traffic between man

and woman? we study all our lives long how to put tricks upon one another—No fowler lays abroad more nets for his game, nor a hunter for his prey, than you do to catch poor innocent men—Why do you sit three or four hours at your toilet in a morning? only with a villanous design to make some poor fellow a fool before night. What d'ye sigh for? What d'ye weep for? What d'ye pray for? Why, for a husband. That is, you implore Providence to assist you in the just and pious design of making the wisest of his creatures a fool, and the head of the creation a slave.

Ori. Sir, I am proud of my power, and am resolved to use it.

Mir. Hold, hold, madam, not so fast—As you have variety of vanities to make coxcombs of us, so we have vows, oaths, and protestations, of all sorts and sizes, to make fools of you. And this, in short, my dear creature, is our present condition. I have sworn and lied briskly to gain my ends of you; your ladyship has patched and painted violently to gain your ends of me.—But since we are both disappointed, let us make a drawn battle, and part clear on both sides.

Ori. With all my heart, sir; give me up my contract, and I'll never see your face again.

Mir. Indeed I won't, child.

Ori. What, sir, neither do one nor t'other?

Mir. No, you shall die a maid, unless you please to be otherwise upon my terms.

Ori. Sir, you're a—

Mir. What am I, mistress?

Ori. A villain, sir!

Mir. I am glad on't—I never knew an honest fellow in my life, but was a villain upon these occasions.—Ha'nt you drawn yourself now into a very

pretty dilemma? Ha, ha, ha! the poor lady has made a vow of virginity, when she thought of making a vow for the contrary. Was ever poor woman so cheated into chastity?

Ori. Sir, my fortune is equal to yours, my friends as powerful, and both shall be put to the test, to do me justice.

Mir. What! you'll force me to marry you, will ye?

Ori. Sir, the law shall.

Mir. But the law can't force me to do any thing else, can it?

Ori. Pshaw, I despise thee—monster!

Mir. Kiss and be friends then—Don't cry, child, and you shall have your sugar-plum—Come, madam, d'ye think I could be so unreasonable as to make you fast all your life long? No, I did but jest, you shall have your liberty; here, take your contract, and give me mine.

Ori. No, I won't.

Mir. Eh! What, is the girl a fool?

Ori. No, sir, you shall find me cunning enough to do myself justice: and since I must not depend upon your love, I'll be revenged and force you to marry me out of spite.

Mir. Then I'll beat thee out of spite; and make a most confounded husband.

Ori. O sir, I shall match ye: a good husband makes a good wife at any time.

Mir. I'll rattle down your china about your ears.

Ori. And I'll rattle about the city to run you in debt for more.

Mir. I'll tear the lace off your clothes, and when you swoon for vexation, you shalt have a penny to buy a bottle of hartshorn.

Ori. And you, sir, shall have hartshorn in abundance.

Mir. I'll keep as many mistresses as I have coach-horses.

Ori. And I'll keep as many gallants as you have grooms.

Mir. But, sweet madam, there is such a thing as a divorce.

Ori. But, sweet sir, there is such a thing as alimony; so, divorce on, and spare not. [*exit.*]

Mir. Ay, that separate maintenance is the devil—that's their refuge—o'my conscience, one would take cuckoldom for a meritorious action because the women are so handsomely rewarded for't. [*exit.*]

Enter Durelle and Petit.

Dur. And she's mighty peevish, you say?

Pet. O sir, she has a tongue as long as my leg, and talks so crabbedly, you would think she always spoke Welsh.

Dur. That's an odd language methinks for her philosophy.

Pet. But sometimes she will sit you half a day without speaking a word, and talk oracles all the while by the wrinkles of her forehead, and the motions of her eyebrows.

Dur. Nay, I shall match her in philosophical ogles, faith; that's my talent: I can talk best, you must know, when I say nothing.

Pet. But d'ye ever laugh, sir?

Dur. Laugh? Won't she endure laughing?

Pet. Why, she's a critic, sir; she hates a jest, for fear it should please her; and nothing keeps her in humour but what gives her the spleen. And then for logic, and all that, you know—

Dur. Ay, ay, I'm prepared, I have been practising hard words, and no sense, this hour, to entertain her.

Pet. Then place yourself behind this screen, that

you may have a view of her behaviour before you begin.

Dur. I long to engage her, lest I should forget my lesson.

Pet. Here she comes, sir, I must fl . . .

[Exit Petit; Dur. stands peeping behind the curtain.]

Enter Bizarre and Maid.

Bis. (with a book) Pshaw, hang books, they sour our temper, spoil our eyes, and ruin our complexions.
(throws away the book.)

Dur. Eh! The devil such a word there is in all Aristotle.

Bis. Come, wench, let's be free, call in the fiddler, there's nobody near us.

Dur. Would to the Lord there was not.

Bis. Here, friend, a minuet!—quicker time; ha—would we had a man or two.

Dur. (stealing away) You shall have the devil sooner, my dear dancing philosopher!

Bis. Ods my life!—Here's one. (pulls him back.)

Dur. Is all my learned preparation come to this?

Bis. Come, sir, don't be ashamed, that's my good boy—you're very welcome, we wanted such a one—Come, strike up—I know you dance well, sir, you're finely shaped for't—Come, come, sir; quick, quick, you miss the time else.

Dur. But madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. Ay, ay, talk as you dance, talk as you dance, come.

Dur. But we were talking of dialectics.

Bis. Hang dialectics—Mind the time—quicker, sirrah. (to the fiddler) Come—and how d'ye find yourself now, sir?

Dur. In a fine breathing sweat, doctor.

Bis. All the better, patient, all the better—Come, sir, sing now, sing; I know you sing well; I see you have a singing fate, a heavy, dull, sonata face.

Dur. Who, I sing?

Bis. O, you're modest, sir—but come, sit down; closer, closer.—Here, a bottle of wine—Come, sir, fa, la, la; sing, sir.

Dur. But, madam, I came to talk with you.

Bis. O, sir, you shall drink first. Come, fill me a bumper—here, sir, bless the king.

Dur. Would I were out of his dominions! By this light, she'll make me drunk too. *(aside.)*

Bis. O pardon me, sir, you shall do me right; fill it higher.—Now, sir, can you drink a health under your leg?

Dur. Rare philosophy that, faith.

Bis. Come, off with it to the bottom. Now, how d'ye like me, sir?

Dur. O, mighty well, madam!

Bis. You see how a woman's fancy varies; sometimes splenetic and heavy, then gay and frolicsome.—And how d'ye like the humour?

Dur. Good madam, let me sit down to answer you, for I am heartily tired.

Bis. Fie upon't; a young man, and tired! up, for shame, and walk about: action becomes us—a little faster, sir—What d'ye think now of my lady La Pale, and lady Coquet, the duke's fair daughter? Ha! Are they not brisk lasses? Then there is black Mrs. Bellair, and brown Mrs. Bellface.

Dur. They are all strangers to me, madam.

Bis. But let me tell you, sir, that brown is not always despicable.

Dur. Upon my soul, I don't—

Bis. And then you must have heard of the English beau, Spleenamore, how unlike a gentleman—

Dur. Hey—not a syllable on't, as I hope to be saved, madam.

Bis. No! why then play me a jig. Come, sir.

Dur. By this light, I cannot ; faith, madam, I have sprained my leg.

Bis. Then sit you down, sir ; and now tell me what's your business with me ? What's your errand ? Quick, quick, despatch—Odso, may be you are some gentleman's servant, that has brought me a letter, or a haunch of venison.

Dur. 'Sdeath ! madam, do I look like a carrier ?

Bis. O, cry you mercy ; I saw you just now, I mistook you, upon my word : you are one of the travelling gentlemen—and pray, sir, how do all our impudent friends in Italy ?

Dur. Madam, I came to wait on you with a more serious intention than your entertainment has answered.

Bis. Sir, your intention of waiting on me was the greatest affront imaginable, how'er your expressions may turn it to a compliment : your visit, sir, was intended as a prologue to a very scurvy play, of which Mr. Mirabel and you so handsomely laid the plot.—“Marry ! No, no, I'm a man of more honour.” Where's your honour ? Where's your courage now ? Ads my life, I have a great mind to kick you.—Go, go to your fellow-rake now, rail at my sex, and get drunk for vexation, and write a lampoon—But I must have you to know, sir, that my reputation is above the scandal of a libel, my virtue is sufficiently approved to those whose opinion is my interest : and, for the rest, let them talk what they will ; for when I please, I'll be what I please, in spite of you and all mankind ; and so, my dear man of honour, if you be tired, con over this lesson, and sit there till I come to you. *(runs off.)*

Dur. Tum ti dum. *(sings)* Ha, ha, ha !—“Ads my life, I have a great mind to kick you !”—Oons and confusion ! *(starts up)* Was ever man so abused ?—Ay, Mirabel set me on.

Re-enter Petit.

Pet. Well, sir, how d'ye find yourself?

Dur. You son of a nine-eyed whore, d'ye come to abuse me? I'll kick you with a vengeance, you dog.

(Petit runs off, and Dur. after him.)

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I. THE SAME.

Enter Old Mirabel and Mirabel

O. Mir. Bob, come hither, Bob.

Mir. Your pleasure, sir?

O. Mir. Are not you a great rogue, sirrah?

Mir. That's a little out of my comprehension, sir; for I've heard say that I resemble my father.

O. Mir. Your father is your very humble slave—I tell thee what, child, thou art a very pretty fellow, and I love thee heartily; and a very great villain, and I hate thee mortally.

Mir. Villain, sir! Then I must be a very impudent one, for I can't recollect any passage of my life that I'm ashamed of.

O. Mir. Come hither, my dear friend; dost see this picture?

(shows him a little picture.)

Mir. Orianna's! Pshaw!

O. Mir. What, sir, won't you look upon't?—Bob, dear Bob, pr'ythee come hither now—Dost want any money, child?

Mir. No, sir.

O. Mir. Why then here's some for thee; come here now—How canst thou be so hard-hearted an unnatural, unmannerly rascal (don't mistake me, child, I an't angry,) as to abuse this tender, lovely, good-natured, dear rogue?—Why, she sighs for

thee, and cries for thee, pouts for thee, and snubs for thee; the poor little heart of it is like to burst——Come, my dear boy, be good-natured like your own father, be now—and then see here, read this—the effigies of the lovely Oriana, with ten thousand pounds, to her portion——ten thousand pounds you dog; ten thousand pounds, you rogue. How dare you refuse a lady with ten thousand pounds, you impudent rascal?

Mir. Will you hear me speak, sir?

O. Mir. Hear you speak, sir? If you had ten thousand tongues, you could not out-talk ten thousand pounds, sir.

Mir. Nay, sir, if you won't hear me, I'll be gone, sir! I'll take post for Italy this moment.

O. Mir. Ah! the fellow knows I won't part with him. (*aside*) Well, sir, what have you to say?

Mir. The universal reception, sir, that marriage has had in the world, is enough to fix it for a public good, and to draw every body into the common cause; but there are some constitutions, like some instruments, so peculiarly singular, that they make terrible music by themselves, but never do well in a concert.

O. Mir. Why this is reason, I must confess; but yet it is nonsense too: for though you should reason like an angel, if you argue yourself out of a good estate, you talk like a fool.

Mir. But, sir, if you bribe into bondage with the riches of Cræsus, you leave me but a beggar for want of my liberty.

O. Mir. Was ever such a perverse fool heard? 'Sdeath, sir, why did I give you education? was it to dispute me out of my senses? Of what colour now is the head of this cane? You'll say, 'tis white, and ten to one make me believe it too—I thought that young fellows studied to get money.

Mir. No, sir, I have studied to despise it ; my reading was not to make me rich, but happy, sir.

O. Mir. There he has me again now. (*aside*) But, sir, did not I marry to oblige you ?

Mir. To oblige me, sir ! In what respect, pray :

O. Mir. Why, to bring you into the world, sir ; wan't that an obligation ?

Mir. And because I would have it still an obligation, I avoid marriage.

O. Mir. How is that, sir ?

Mir. Because I would not curse the hour I was born.

O. Mir. Lookye, friend, you may persuade me out of my designs, but I'll command you out of yours ; and though you may convince my reason that you are in the right, yet there is an old attendant of sixty-three, called positiveness, which you, nor all the wits in Italy shall ever be able to shake : so, sir, you're a wit, and I'm a father : you may talk, but I'll be obeyed.

Mir. This it is to have the son a finer gentleman than the father ; they first give us breeding that they don't understand, then they turn us out of doors 'cause we are wiser than themselves. But I'm a little aforehand with the old gentleman. (*aside*) Sir, you have been pleased to settle a thousand pounds sterling a year upon me ; in return of which, I have a verry great honour for you and your family, and shall take care that your only and beloved son shall do nothing to make him hate his father, or to hang himself. So, dear sir, I'm your very humble servant. [*runs off*].

O. Mir. Here, sirrah, rogue, Bob, villain !

Enter Dugard.

Dug. Ah, sir, 'tis but what he deserves.

O. Mir. 'Tis false, sir, he don't deserve it ; what have you to say against my boy, sir ?

Dug. I shall only repeat your own words

O. Mir. What have you to do with my words ? I have swallow'd my words already, I have eaten them up, and how can you come at 'em, sir ?—I say that Bob's an honest fellow, and who dares deny it ?

Enter Bizarro.

Bis. That dare I, sir—I say that your son is a wild, foppish, whimsical, impertinent coxcomb ; and were I abused as this gentleman's sister is, I would make an Italian quarrel, and poison the whole family.

Dug. Come, sir, 'tis no time for trifling ; my sister is abused, you are made sensible of the affront, and your honour is concerned to see her redressed.

O. Mir. Lookye, Mr. Dugard, good words go furthest. I will do your sister justice, but it must be after my own rate ; nobody must abuse my son but myself. For although Robin be a sad dog, yet he's nobody's puppy but my own.

Bis. Ay, that's my sweet-natured kind old gentleman. (*wheeling him*) We will be good then, if you'll join with us in the plot.

O. Mir. Ah, you coaxing young baggage, what plot can you have to wheedle a fellow of sixty-three.

Bis. A plot that sixty-three is only good for, to bring other people together, sir ; a Spanish plot, less dangerous than that of eighty-eight ; and you must act the Spaniard, 'cause your son will least suspect you ; and if he should, your authority protects you from a quarrel, to which Oriana is unwilling to expose her brother.

O. Mir. And what part will you act in the business, madam ?

Bis. Myself, sir. My friend is now a perfect

changeling : these foolish hearts of ours spoil our heads presently ; the fellows no sooner turn knaves, but we turn fools. But I am still myself ; and he may expect the most severe usage from me, 'cause I neither love him nor hate him. *[exit.]*

O. Mir. Well said, Mrs. Paradox ; but, sir, who must open the matter to him :

Dug. Petit, sir, who is our engineer-general. And here he comes.

Enter Petit.

Pet. O, sir, more discoveries ! are all friends about us ?

Dug. Ay, ay, speak freely.

Pet. You must know, sir—Od's my life, I'm out of breath ; you must know, sir—you must know—

O. Mir. What the devil must we know, sir ?

Pet. That I have (*pants and blows*) bribed, sir, bribed—your son's secretary of state.

O. Mir. Secretary of state !—Who's that, for heaven's sake ?

Pet. His valet-de-chambre, sir ! you must know, sir, that the intrigue lay folded up with his master's clothes ; and when he went to dust the embroidered suit, the secret flew out of the right pocket of his coat, in a whole swarm of your crambo songs, short footed odes, and long-legged Pindarics.

O. Mir. Impossible !

Pet. Ah, sir, he has loved her all along ; there was Oriana in every line, but he hates marriage. Now, sir, this plot will stir up his jealousy, and we shall know by the strength of that how to proceed further.—Come, sir, let's about it with speed.

[exeunt.]

Enter Mirabel and Bizarre, passing carelessly by one another.

Bis. I wonder what she can see in this fellow to, like him ! *(aside.)*

Mir. I wonder what my friend can see in this girl to admire her ! *(aside.)*

Bis. A wild, foppish, extravagant rake. *(aside.)*

Mir. A light, whimsical, impertinent mad-cap. *(aside.)*

Bis. Whom do you mean, sir ?

Mir. Whom do you mean, madam ?

Bis. A fellow that has nothing left to re-establish him for a human creature, but a prudent resolution to hang himself.

Mir. There is a way, madam, to force me to that resolution.

Bis. I'll do it with all my heart.

Mir. Then you must marry me.

Bis. Lookye, sir, don't think your ill manners to me shall excuse your ill usage of my friend, nor by fixing a quarrel here, to divert my zeal for the absent : for I'm resolved, nay, I come prepared, to make you a panegyric that shall mortify your pride like any modern dedication.

Mir. And I, madam, like a true modern patron, shall hardly give you thanks for your trouble.

Bis. Come, sir, to let you see what little foundation you have for your dear sufficiency, I'll take you to pieces.

Mir. And what piece will you choose ?

Bis. Your heart, to be sure ; 'cause I should get presently rid on't ; your courage I would give to a Hector, your wit to a play-maker, your honour to an attorney, your body to the physicians, and your soul to its master.

Mir. I had the oddest dream last night of the duchess of Burgundy ; methought the furbelows of her gown were pinned up so high behind, that I could not see her head for her tail.

Bis. The creature don't mind me ! *(aside.)* Do you

think, sir, that your humourous impertinence can divert me? No, sir, I'm above any pleasure that you can give, but that of seeing you miserable. And mark me, sir, my friend, my injured friend, shall yet be doubly happy, and you shall be a husband as much as the rites of marriage, and the breach of them, can make you.

(Mirabel pulls out a Virgil and reads to himself.)

Mir. 'At egina dolos, (quis fallere possit amantem?) Dissimulare etiam sperasti, perfide tantum'. Very true, *Possé nefas.*

By your favour, friend Virgil, 'twas but a rascally trick of your hero to forsake poor Pug so inhumanly.

Bis. I don't know what to say to him. *(aside)* The devil—what's Virgil to us, sir?

Mir. Very much, madam; the most á-propos in the world—for what should I chop upon but the very place where the perjured rogue of a lover and the forsaken lady are battling it tooth and nail. Come, madam, spend your spirits no longer; we'll take an easier method: I'll be Æneas now, and you shall be Dido, and we'll rail by book. Now for you madam Dido.

'Nec te noster amor, nec te data dextera quondam,

'Nec moritura tenet crudeli funere Dido——

Ah poor Dido!

(looks at her.)

Bis. Rudeness, affronts, impatience! I could almost start out even to manhood, and want but a weapon as long as his to fight him upon the spot. What shall I say? *(aside.)*

Mir. Now she rants—

'Quæ quibus anteferam? Jam jam nec maxima Juno.'

Bis. A man! No, the woman's birth was spirited away.

Mir. Right, right, madam; the very words

Bis. And some pernicious elf left in the cradle,
with human shape to palliate the growing mischief.

(speak together, and raise their voices by degrees.)

Mir. 'Perfide sed duris genuit te cautibus horrens
Caucasus, Hyrcanæque admorunt Ubera Tigres.'

Bis. Go, sir, fly to your midnight revels——

Mir. Excellent !

'I sequare Italiam ventis, pete regna per undas,
'Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia Numina pos-
sunt.'

(together again.)

Bis. Now the devil take his impudence ! he vexes
me so, I don't know whether to cry or laugh at him

(aside.)

Mir. Bravely performed, my dear Libyan. I'll
write the tragedy of Dido, and you shall act the
part : but you do nothing at all, unless you fret your-
self into a fit, for here the poor lady is stifled with
vapours, drops into the arms of her maids ; and the
cruel, barbarous, deceitful wanderer is in the very
next line called pious Æneas.—There's authority for
ye.

Sorry indeed Æneas stood

To see her in a pout ;

But Jove himself, who ne'er thought good

To stay a second bout,

Commands him off with all his crew,

And leaves poor Dy, as I leave you. *(runs off.)*

Bis. Go thy ways for a dear, mad, deceitful,
agreeable fellow. O my conscience, I must excuse
Oriana.

That lover soon his angry fair disarms,

Whose slighting pleases, and whose faults are charms.

*Re-enter Petit, who runs about to every door and
knocks.*

Pet. Mr. Mirabel ! Sir, where are you ? no where
to be found ?

Re-enter Mirabel.

Mir. What's the matter, Petit ?

Pet. Most critically met—Ah, sir, that one who has followed the game so long, and brought the poor hare just under his paws, should let a mongrel cur chop in, and run away with the puss.

Mir. If your worship can get out of your allegories, be pleased to tell me in three words what you mean !

Pet. Plain, plain, sir. Your mistress and mine is going to be married.

Mir. I believe you lie, sir.

Pet. Your humble servant, sir. *(going.)*

Mir. Come hither, Petit. Married, say you ?

Pet. No, sir, 'tis no matter ; I only thought to do you a service, but I shall take care how I confer my favours for the future.

Mir. Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons. *(bows low.)*

Pet. 'Tis enough, sir—I come to tell you, sir, that Oriana is this moment to be sacrificed ; married past redemption.

Mir. I understand her ; she'll take a husband out of spite to me, and then out of love to me she will make him a cuckold. But who is the happy man ?

Pet. A lord, sir.

Mir. I'm her ladyship's most humble servant ; a train and a title ; hey ! Room for my lady's coach ! A front row in the box for her ladyship ! Lights, lights, for her honour !—Now must I be a constant attender at my lord's levee, to work my way to my lady's couchee—a countess, I presume, sir !

Pet. A Spanish count, sir, that Mr. Dugard knew abroad, is come to Paris, saw your mistress yesterday, marries her to-day, and whips her into Spain to-morrow.

Mir. Ay, is it so ? and must I follow my cuckold

over the Pyrennees? Had she married within the precincts of a billet-doux, I would be the man to lead her to church; but, as it happens, I'll forbid the banns. Where is this mighty don?

Pet. Have a care, sir; he's a rough, cross-grained piece, and there's no tampering with him. Would you apply to Mr. Dugard, or the lady herself, something might be done; for it is in despite to you that the business is carried so hastily. Odso, sir, here he comes. I must be gone. *[Exit.]*

Re-enter Old Mirabel, dressed in a Spanish habit, leading Oriana.

Ori. Good, my lord, a nobler choice had better suited your lordship's merit. My person, rank, and circumstance expose me as the public theme of railery, and subject me so to injurious usage, my lord, that I can lay no claim to any part of your regard, except your pity.

O Mir. Breathes he vital air, that dares presume
With rude behaviour to profane such excellence?

Show me the man——

And you shall see how my sudden revenge
Shall fall upon the head of such presumption.

Is this thing one? *(strutting up to Mirabel.)*

Mir. Sir!

Ori. Good, my lord.

O Mir. If he, or any he——

Ori. Pray, my lord, the gentleman's a stranger.

O Mir. O, your pardon, sir—but if you had—remember, sir—the lady now is mine, her injuries are mine; therefore, sir, you understand me——Come, madam. *(leads Oriana to the door; she goes off.)*

Mirabel runs to his father, and pulls him by the sleeve.

Mir. Ecoutez, monsieur le count.

O Mir. Your business, sir?

Mir. Boh!

O. *Mir.* Boh ! What language is that, sir ?

Mir. Spanish, my lord.

O. *Mir.* What d'ye mean ?

Mir. This, sir. *(trips up his heels.*

O. *Mir.* A very concise quarrel, truly—I'll bully him. *(aside)* Trinidade seigneur, give me fair play. *(offers to rise.*

Mir. By all means, sir. *(takes away his sword)* Now, seigneur, where's that bombast look and fustian face your countship wore just now ? *(strikes him.*

O. *Mir.* But hold, sirrah, no more jesting ; I'm your father, sir, your father !

Mir. My father ! Then by this light I could find in my heart to pay thee. *(aside)* Is the fellow mad ? Why sure, sir, I han't frightened you out of your senses ?

O. *Mir.* But you have, sir.

Mir. Then I'll beat them into you again.

(offers to strike him.

O. *Mir.* Why, rogue—Bob, dear Bob, don't you know me, child ?

Mir. Ha, ha, ha ! the fellow's downright distracted ! Thou miracle of impudence ! wouldst thou make believe that such a grave gentleman as my father would go a masquerading thus ? That a person of threescore-and-three would run about in a fool's coat to disgrace himself and family ? Why, you impudent villain, do you think I will suffer such an affront to pass upon my honoured father, my worthy father, my dear father ? 'Sdeath, sir, mention my father but once again, and I'll send your soul to thy grandfather this minute ! *(offers to stab him.*

O. *Mir.* Well, well, I am not your father.

Mir. Why then, sir, you are the saucy, hectoring Spaniard, and I'll use you accordingly.

O. *Mir.* The devil take the Spaniards, sir, we have

all got nothing but blows since we began to take their part.

Re-enter Dugard, Oriana, and Petit; with Maid.

Dugard runs to Mirabel, the rest to Old Mirable.

Dug. Fie, fie, Mirabel, murder your father!

Mir. My father! What, is the whole family mad? Give me way, sir; I won't be held.

O. Mir. No, nor I neither; let me be gone, pray.
(*offers to go.*)

Mir. My father!

O. Mir. Ay, you dog's face! I am your father; for I have bore as much for thee as your mother ever did.

Mir. O ho! then this was a trick it seems, a design, a contrivance, a stratagem—Oh! how my bones ache!

O. Mir. Your bones, sirrah; why yours?

Mir. Why, sir, han't I been beating my own flesh and blood all this while? O, madam, (*to Oriana*) I wish your ladyship joy of your new dignity. Here was a contrivance indeed.

Pet. The contrivance was well enough, sir; for they imposed upon us all.

Mir. Well, my dear Dulcinea, did your don Quixote battle for you bravely? My father will answer for the force of my love.

Ori. Pray, sir, don't insult the misfortunes of your own creating.

Dug. My prudence will be counted cowardice, if I stand tamely now. (*aside; comes up between Mirabel and his sister*) Well, sir!

Mir. Well, sir! Do you take me for one of your tenants, sir, that you put on your landlord face at me?

Dug. On what presumption, sir, dare you assume thus?
(*draws.*)

O. Mir. What's that to you, sir?
(*draws.*)

Pet. Help! help! the lady faints.

Mir. Vapours ! vapours ! she'll come to herself. If it be an angry fit, a dram of assafœtida—If jealousy, hartshorn in water—If the mother, burnt feathers—If grief, ratifia—If it be straight stays or corns, there's nothing like a dram of plain brandy. [*exit.*]

Ori. Hold off ; give me air —O, my brother, would you preserve my life, endanger not your own ; would you defend my reputation, leave it to itself. 'Tis a dear vindication that's purchased by the sword ; for though our champion proves victorious, yet our honour is wounded.

O. Mir. Ay, and your lover may be wounded, that's another thing. But I think you are pretty brisk again, my child.

Ori. Ay, sir, my indisposition was only a pretence to divert the quarrel : the capricious taste of your sex excuses this artifice in ours.

For often, when our chief perfections fail,

Our chief defects with foolish men prevail. [*exit.*]

Pet. Come, Mr. Dugard, take courage ; there is a way still left to fetch him again.

O. Mir. Sir, I'll have no plot that has any relation to Spain.

Dug. I scorn all artifice whatsoever, my sword shall do her justice.

Pet. Pretty justice, truly ! Suppose you run him through the body ; you run her through the heart at the same time.

O. Mir. And me through the head—rot your sword, sir ; we'll have plots : come, Petit, let's hear.

Pet. What if she pretends to go into a nunnery, and so bring him about to declare himself ?

Dug. That I must confess has a face.

O. Mir. A face ! A face like an angel, sir. Ad's my life, sir, 'tis the most beautiful plot in Christendom. We'll about it immediately. [*exeunt.*]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I. OLD MIRABEL'S HOUSE.

Enter Old Mirabel and Dugard.

Dug. The lady abbess is my relation, and privy to the plot.

O. Mir. Ay, ay, this nunnery will bring him about, I warrant ye.

Enter Durelôte.

Dur. Here, where are ye all?—O! Mr. Mirabel, you have done fine things for your posterity—And you Mr. Dugard, may come to answer this—I come to demand my friend at your hands; restore him, sir, or—
(*to Old Mirabel.*)

O. Mir. Restore him! What, d'ye think I have got him in my trunk, or my pocket?

Dur. Sir, he's mad, and you're the cause on't.

O. Mir. That may be; for I was as mad as he when I begot him.

Dug. Mad, sir; What d'ye mean?

Dur. What do you mean, sir, by shutting up your sister yonder to talk like a parrot through a cage? or a decoy-duck, to draw others into the snare? Your son, sir, because she has deserted him, has forsaken the world; and in three words, has—(*to Old Mir.*)

O. Mir. Hanged himself!

Dur. The very same—turned friar.

O. Mir. You lie, sir; 'tis ten times worse. Bob turned friar!—Why should the fellow shave his foolish crown, when the same razor may cut his throat?

Dur. If you have any command, or you any interest over him, lose not a minute: he has thrown himself into the next monastery, and has ordered me to pay off his servants, and discharge his equipage.

O. Mir. Let me alone to ferret him out; I'll sacri-

face the abbot, if he receives him ; I'll try whether the spiritual or the natural father has the most right to the child.—But, dear captain, what has he done with his estate ?

Dur. Settled it upon the church, sir.

O. Mir. The church ! Nay, then the devil won't get him out of their clutches—Ten thousand livres a year upon the church ! 'Tis downright sacrilege—Come, gentlemen, all hands to work ; for half that sum, one of these monasteries shall protect you a traitor from the law, a rebellious wife from her husband, and a disobedient son from his own father.

[*exit.*

Dug. But will ye persuade me that he's gone to a monastery ?

Dur. Is your sister gone to the Filles Repenties ? I tell you, sir, she's not fit for the society of repenting maids.

Dug. Why so, sir ?

Dur. Because she's neither one nor t'other ; she's too old to be a maid, and too young to repent.

[*exeunt.*

SCENE II. THE INSIDE OF A MONASTERY.

Oriana discovered in a Nun's habit, with Bizarre.

Ori. I hope, Bizarre, there is no harm in jesting with this religious habit ?

Bis. To me, the greatest jest in the habit is taking it in earnest : I don't understand this imprisoning people with the keys of paradise, nor the merit of that virtue which comes by constraint. But I must be gone upon my affairs ; I have brought my captain about again.

Ori. But why will you trouble yourself with that coxcomb.

Bis. Because he is a coxcomb ; had I not better

have a lover like him, that I can make an ass of, than a lover like yours, to make a fool of me? (*knocking below*) A message from Mirabel, I'll lay my life. (*she runs to the door*) Come hither, run; thou charming nun, come hither.

Ori. What's the news?

Bis. Don't you see who's below?

Ori. I see nobody but a friar.

Bis. Ah! thou poor blind Cupid! O my conscience, these hearts of ours spoil our heads instantly! the fellows no sooner turn knaves than we turn fools. A friar! don't you see a villanous genteel mein under that cloak of hypocrisy?

Ori. As I live, Mirabel turned friar! I hope, in heaven, he's not in earnest.

Bis. In earnest: ha, ha, ha! are you in earnest? Now's your time; this disguise he has certainly taken for a passport, to get in and try your resolutions; stick to your habit, to be sure; treat him with disdain, rather than anger; for pride becomes us more than passion; remember what I say, if you would yield to advantage, and hold out the attack; to draw him on, keep him off to be sure.

The cunning gamesters never gain too fast,

But lose at first, to win the more at last. [*exit.*]

Enter Mirabel in a Friar's habit.

Mir. Save you, sister—Your brother, young lady, having a regard for your soul's health, hath sent me to prepare you for the sacred habit by confession.

Ori. That's false; the cloven foot already. (*aside*) My brother's care I own; and to you, sacred sir, I confess, that the great crying sin which I have long indulged, and now prepare to expiate, was love.

Mir. She's downright stark mad in earnest; death and confusion, I have lost her! (*aside*) You confess your fault, madam, in such moving terms, that I could almost be in love with the sin

Ori. Take care, sir; crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards; my chief delight became my only grief; he in whose breast I thought my heart secure, turned robber, and despoiled the treasure that he kept.

Mir. Perhaps that treasure he esteems so much, that like the miser, though afraid to use it, he reserves it safe.

Ori. No, holy father: who can be miser in another's wealth, that's prodigal of his own? His heart was open, shared to all he knew; and what, alas! must then become of mine? but the same eyes that drew this passion in, shall send it out in tears, to which now hear my vow—

Mir. (*discovering himself*) No, my fair angel, but let me repent; here on my knees behold the criminal that vows repentance his.—Ha! no concern upon her?

Enter Old Mirabel.

O. Mir. Where, where's this counterfeit nun?

Ori. Madness! confusion! I'm ruined!

Mir. What do I hear? (*puts on his hood*) What did you say, sir?

O. Mir. I say she's a counterfeit, and you may be another for aught I know, sir: I have lost my child by these tricks, sir.

Mir. What tricks, sir?

O. Mir. By a pretended trick, sir. A contrivance to bring my son to reason, and it has made him stark mad; I have lost him and a thousand pounds a year.

Mir. (*discovering himself*) My dear father, I'm your most humble servant.

O. Mir. My dear boy, welcome ex inferis, my dear boy, 'tis all a trick, she's no more a nun than I am.

Mir. No!

O. Mir. The devil a bit.

Mir. Then thank ye, my dear dad, for the most happy news—And now, most venerable holy sister,
(*kneels.*)

Your mercy and your pardon I implore,

For the offence of asking it before.

Lookye, my dear counterfeiting nun, take my advice, be a nun in good earnest; women make the best nuns always when they can't do otherwise.

Ori. O! sir, how unhappily have you destroyed what was so near perfection! He is the counterfeit that has deceived you.

O. Mir. Ha! Lookye, sir, I recant, she is a nun.

Mir. Sir, your humble servant, then I'm a friar this moment.

O. Mir. Was ever an old fool so bantered by a brace o'young ones; hang you both, you're both counterfeits, and my plot's spoiled, that's all.

Ori. Shame and confusion, love, anger, and disappointment, will work my brain to madness. [*exit.*]

Mir. Ay, ay, throw by the rags, they have served a turn for us both, and they shall e'en go off together.
[*exit, throwing away the habit.*]

SCENE III. OLD MIRABEL'S HOUSE.

Enter Duretôt, with a letter.

Dur. (*reads*) *My rudeness was only a proof of your humour, which I have found so agreeable, that I own myself penitent, and willing to make any reparation upon your first appearance to*

BISARRE.

Mirabel swears she loves me, and this confirms it; then farewell gallantry, and welcome revenge; 't's my turn now to be upon the sublime; I'll take her off, I warrant her.

Enter Bizarre.

Well, mistress, do you love me?

Bis. I hope, sir, you will pardon the modesty of—

Dur. Of what? of a dancing devil?—Do you love me, I say?

Bis. Perhaps I——

Dur. What?

Bis. Perhaps I do not.

Dur. Ha! abused again! Death, woman, I'll——

Bis. Hold, hold, sir; I do, I do!

Dur. Confirm it then by your obedience; stand there, and ogle me now, as if your heart, blood, and soul, were like to fly out at your eyes—First, the direct surprise. (*she looks full upon him*) Right; next the *deux yeux par oblique*. (*she gives him the side glance*) Right; now depart and languish. (*she turns from him and looks over her shoulder*) Very well; now sigh. (*she sighs*) Now drop your fan on purpose. (*she drops her fan*) Now take it up again: Come now, confess your faults, are not you a proud—say after me.

Bis. Proud.

Dur. Impertinent.

Bis. Impertinent.

Dur. Ridiculous.

Bis. Ridiculous.

Dur. Flirt.

Bis. Puppy.

Dur. 'Zoons! woman, don't provoke me; we are alone, and you don't know but the devil may tempt me to do you a mischief; ask my pardon immediately

Bis. I do, sir; I only mistook the word.

Dur. Cry then; have you got e'er a handkerchief?

Bis. Yes, sir.

Dur. Cry, then, handsomely; cry like a queen in a tragedy. (*she pretends to cry, bursts out a laughing.*

Enter six Ladies, laughing.

Bis. Ha, ha, ha!

Ladies Ha, ha, ha!

Dur. Hell brooke loose upon me, and all the furies fluttered about my ears! Betrayed again!

Bis. That you are, upon my word, my dear captain; ha, ha, ha!

Dur. The Lord deliver me.

1 Lady. What! is this the mighty man with the bull-face, that comes to frighten ladies?

Bis. A man! It's some great dairy-maid in man's clothes.

Dur. Lookye, dear Christian women, pray bear me.

Bis. Will you ever attempt a lady's honour again?

Dur. If you please to let me get away with my honour, I'll do any thing in the world.

Bis. Will you persuade your friend to marry mine?

Dur. O yes, to be sure.

Bis. And will you do the same by me?

Dur. Burn me if I do, if the coast be clear. [*exit.*]

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! Come, ladies, we'll go and make an end of our tea. [*exeunt.*]

Enter Mirabel and Old Mirabel.

Mir. Your patience, sir. I tell you I won't marry; and though you send all the bishops in France to persuade me, I shall never believe their doctrine against their practice. You would compel me to that state, which I have heard you curse yourself, when my mother and you have battled it for a whole week together.

O. Mir. Never but once, you rogue, and that was when she longed for six Flanders mares: ay, sir, then she was breeding of you, which showed what an expensive dog I should have of you.

Enter Petit.

Well, Petit, how does she now

Pet. Mad, sir, com pompos—Ay, Mr. Mirabel, you'll believe that I speak truth now, when I confess that I have told you hitherto nothing but lies; our jesting is come to a sad earnest, she's downright distracted.

Re-enter Bizarre.

Bis. Where is this mighty victor?—The great exploit is done; go triumph in the glory of your conquest, inhuman, barbarous man! O sir, (*to Old Mirabel*) your wretched ward has found a tender guardian of you; where her young innocence expected protection, here has she found her ruin.

O. Mir. Ay, the fault is mine, for I believe that rogue won't marry, for fear of begetting such another disobedient son as his father did. I have done all I can, madam, and now can do no more that run mad for company. (*cries*

Enter Dugard, with his sword drawn.

Dug. Away! Revenge, revenge!

O. Mir. Patience, patience, sir. (*Old Mirabel holds him*) Bob, draw. (*aside.*

Dug. Patience! The coward's virtue, and the brave man's failing, when thus provoked—Villain!

Mir. Your sister's frenzy shall excuse your madness; and to show my concern for what she suffers, I'll bear the villain from her brother.—Put up your anger with your sword; I have a heart like your's, that swells at an affront received, but melts at an injury given, and if the lovely Oriana's grief be such a moving scene, 'twill find a part within this breast, perhaps as tender as a brother's.

Dug. To prove that soft compassion for her grief, endeavour to remove it.—There, there, behold an object that's infective; I cannot view her, but I am as mad as she.

Enter Oriana, they place her in a chair.

A sister that my dying parents left with their last words and blessing to my care. Sister, dearest sister.

O. Mir. Ay, poor child, poor child, d'ye know me?

Ori. You! you are Amadis de Gaul, sir;—Oh! oh my heart! Were you never in love, fair lady?—And do you never dream of flowers and gardens?—I dream of walking fires, and tall gigantic sights. Take heed, it comes now—What's that? Pray stand away: I have seen that face sure.—How light my head is!

Mir. What piercing charms has beauty, ev'n in madness—Come, madam, try to repose a little.

Ori. I cannot; for I must be up to go to church, and I must dress me, put on my new gown, and be so fine, to meet my love. Hey, ho!—Will not you tell me where my heart lies buried?

Mir. My very soul is touched—Your hand, my fair.

Ori. How soft and gentle you feel! I'll tell you your fortune, friend.

Mir. How she stares upon me!

Ori. You have a flattering face; but 'tis a fair one—I warrant you have five hundred mistresses—Ay, to be sure, a mistress for every guinea in his pocket—Will you pray for me? I shall die to-morrow—And will you ring my passing bell?

Mir. Do you know me, injured creature?

Ori. No,—but you shall be my intimate acquaintance—in the grave.

(weeps.)

Mir. O tears, I must believe you; sure there's a kind of sympathy in madness; for even I, obdurate as I am, to feel my soul so tossed with storms of passion, that I could cry for help as well as she.

(wipes his eyes)

Ori. What, have you lost your lover? No, you mock me: I'll go home and pray.

Mir. Stay, my fair innocence, and hear me own my love so loud that I may call your senses to their place, restore 'em to their charming happy functions and reinstate myself into your favour.

Bis. Let her alone, sir, 'tis all too late; she trembles, hold her; her fits grow stronger by her talking, don't trouble her, she don't know you, sir.

O. Mir. Not know him! what then? she loves to see him for all that.

Re-enter Duretête.

Dur. Where are you all? What the devil! melancholy, and I here! Are ye sad, and such a ridiculous subject, such a very good jest, among you as I am?

Mir. Away with this impertinence; this is no place for bagatelle: I have murdered my honour, destroyed a lady, and my desire of reparation is come too late: see there.

Dur. What ails her?

Mir. Alas! she's mad.

Dur. Mad! dost wonder at that? By this light, they're all so; they're all cozening mad; they're brawling mad; they're proud mad; I just now come from a whole world of mad women, that had almost—What is she dead?

Mir. Dead! heavens forbid.

Dur. Heavens further it; for 'till they be as cold as a key, there's no trusting them: you're never sure that a woman's in earnest, till she is nailed in her coffin. Shall I talk to her? Are you mad mistress?

Bis. What's that to you, sir?

Dur. Oons, madam, are you there? [*exit running.*]

Mir. Away, thou wild buffoon; how poor and

mean this humour now appears ? His follies and my own I here disclaim ; this lady's frenzy has restored my senses, and was she perfect now, as once she was (before you all I speak it), she should be mine ; and as she is, my tears and prayers shall wed her.

Dug. How happy had this declaration been some hours ago.

Bis. Sir, she beckons to you, and waves us to go off ; come, come, let's leave 'em.

[ex. all but Mir. and Ori.]

Ori. Oh, sir.

Mir. Speak, my charming angel, if your dear senses have regained their order ; speak, fair, and bless me with the news.

Ori. First, let me bless the cunning of my sex and that happy counterfeited frenzy that has restored to my poor labouring breast the dearest, best beloved of men.

Mir. Tune, all ye spheres, your instruments of joy, and carry round your spacious orbs the happy sound of Oriana's health ; her soul, whose harmony was next to yours, is now in tune again ; the counterfeiting fair has played the fool.

She was so mad to counterfeit for me ;

I was so mad to pawp my liberty :

But now we both are well, and both are free.

Ori. How, sir, free ?

Mir. As air, my dear bedlamite ; what marry a lunatic ? Lookye, my dear, you have counterfeited madness so very well this bout, that you'll be apt to play the fool all your life long.—Here, gentlemen.

Ori. Monster ! you won't disgrace me ?

Mir. O'my faith, but I will ; here come in gentlemen.—A miracle ! a miracle ! the woman's disposed, the devil's vanished.

Re-enter Old Mirabel and Dugard.

O. Mir. Bless us, was she possessed ?

Mir. With the worst of daemons, sir, a marriage-devil, a horrid devil. Mr. Dugard, don't be surprised, I promised my endeavours to cure your sister ; no mad doctor in Christendom could have done it more effectually. Take her into your charge ; and have a care she don't relapse ; if she should, employ me not again, for I am no more infallible than others of the faculty ; I do cure sometimes.

Ori. Your remedy most barbarous man, will prove the greatest poison of my health ; for though my former frenzy was but counterfeit, I now shall run into a real madness. [*exit ; Old Mirabel follows*]

Dug. This was a turn beyond my knowledge : I'm so confused, I know not how to resent it. [*exit.*]

Mir. What a dangerous precipice have I 'scaped ! Was not I just now on the brink of destruction ?

Enter Durcêlle.

Oh, my friend, let me run into thy bosom ; no lark, escaped from the devouring pounces of a hawk, quakes with more dismal apprehension.

Dur. The matter, man !

Mir. Marriage, hanging ; I was just at the gallows-foot, the running noose about my neck, and the cart wheeling from me.—Oh—I shan't be myself this month again.

Dur. Did not I tell you so ? They are all alike, saints, or devils.

Mir. Ay, ay ; there's no living here with security ; this house is so full of stratagem and design, that I ~~must~~ *must* abroad again.

Dur. With all my heart, I'll bear thee company, my lad ; I'll meet you at the play ; and we'll set out for Italy to-morrow morning.

Mir. A match ; I'll go pay my compliment of leave to my father presently.

Dur. I'm afraid he'll stop you.

Mir. What, pretend a command over me after his settlement of a thousand pounds a year upon me? No, no, he has passed away his authority with the conveyance; the will of a living father is chiefly obeyed for the sake of the dying one.



ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I. A STREET BEFORE THE PLAY-HOUSE.

Enter Mirabel and Durelôte as coming from the play.

Dur. How d'ye like this play?

Mir. I liked the company; the lady, the rich beauty in the front box, had my attention. These impudent poets bring the ladies together to support them, and to kill every body else.

For deaths upon the stage the ladies cry,
But ne'er mind us that in the audience die.

Dur. Hoity-toity; did Philis inspire you with all this?

Mir. Ten times more; the play-house is the element of poetry, because the region of beauty; the ladies, methinks, have a more inspiring triumphant air in the boxes than any where else, they sit commanding on their thrones with all their subject slaves about them: their best clothes, best looks, shining jewels, sparkling eyes, the treasure of the world in a ring. I could wish that my whole life long were the first night of a new play.

Dur. The fellow has quite forgot his journey.
(*aside*) Have you bespoke post houses?

Mir. Grant me but three days, dear captain, one to discover the lady, one to unfold myself, and one to make me happy ; and then I'm yours to the world's end.

Dur. 'Hast thou the impudence to promise thyself a lady of her figure and quality in so short a time ?

Mir. Yes, sir—I have a confident address, no disagreeable person, and five hundred louis-d'ors in my pocket.

Dur. Five hundred louis-d'ors ! You an't mad ?

Mir. I tell you she's worth five thousand ; one of her black brilliant eyes is worth a diamond as big as her head. I compared her necklace with her looks, and the living jewels out sparkled the dead one by a million.

Dur. But you have owned to me, that abating Oriana's pretensions to marriage, you loved her passionately ; then how can you wander at this rate ?

Mir. I longed for a partridge t'other day off the king's plate ; but d'ye think, because I could not have it, I must eat nothing ?

Enter Oriana in boys clothes with a letter.

Ori. Is your name Mirabel, sir ?

Mir. Yes, sir.

Ori. A letter from your uncle in Picardy.

(gives let.)

Mir. (reads) *The bearer is the son of a Protestant gentleman, who, flying for his religion, left me the charge of this youth—A pretty boy—He's fond of some handsome service, that may afford him opportunity of improvement : your care of him will oblige Yours.*

Hast a mind to travel, child ?

Ori. 'Tis my desire, sir ; I should be pleased to serve a traveller in any capacity.

Mir. A hopeful inclination ; you shall along with me into Italy as my page.

Dur. I don't think it safe ; the rogue's (*noise without*) too handsome—The play's done, and some of the ladies come this way.

Enter Lamorce, with her train borne up by a page.

Mir. Duretôte, the very dear, identical she.

Dur. And what then ?

Mir. Why, 'tis she.

Dur. And what then, sir ?

Mir. Then ! Why—Lookye, sirrah, the first piece of service I put upon you, is to follow that lady's coach and bring me word where she lives
(*to Ori.*)

Ori. I don't know the town, sir, and am afraid of losing myself.

Mir. Pshaw !

Lam. Page, what's become of all my people ?

Page. I can't tell, madam ; I can see no sign of your ladyship's coach.

Lam. That fellow is got into his old pranks, and fallen drunk somewhere ; none of the footmen there

Page. Not one, madam.

Lam. These servants are the plague of our lives ; what shall I do ?

Mir. By all my hopes, fortune pimps for me ; now, Duretôte, for a piece of gallantry.

Dur. Why, you won't sure ?

Mir. Won't, brute ! Let not your servant's neglect, madam, put your ladyship to any inconvenience, for you can't be disappointed of an equipage whilst mine waits below ; and would you honour the master so far, he would be proud to pay his attendance.

Dur. Ay, to be sure.

(*aside*)

Lam. Sir, I won't presume to be troublesome, for my habitation is a great way off

Dur. Very true, madam, and he's a little engaged; besides, madam, a hackney-coach will do as well, madam.

Mir. Rude beast, be quiet! *(to Duretôte)* The further from home, madam, the more occasion you have for a guard—pray, madam——

Lam. Lard, sir— *(she declines his entreaties.)*

Dur. Ah! the devil's in his impudence: now he wheedles, she smiles; he flatters, she simpers; he swears, she believes; he's a rogue, and she's a w—— in a moment. *(aside.)*

Mir. Without there! my coach; *Duretôte*, wish me joy. *(hands the lady out.)*

Dur. Wish you safe home! Here, you little picard, go follow your master, and he'll lead you——

Ori. Whither, sir?

Dur. To the academy, child: 'tis the fashion, with men of quality, to teach their pages their exercise—go.

Ori. Won't you go with him too, sir? that woman may do him some harm, I don't like her.

Dur. Why how now, Mr. Page, do you start up to give laws of a sudden? do you pretend to rise at court, and disapprove the pleasure of your betters? Lookye, sirrah, if ever you would rise by a great man, be sure to be with him in his little actions; and as a step to your advancement, follow your master immediately, and make it your hope that he goes to a bagnio.

Ori. Heavens forbid!

[exit.]

Dur. Now would I sooner take a cart in company of the hangman, than a coach with that woman: what a strange antipathy have I taken against these creatures; a woman to me is aversion upon aversion, a cheese, a cat, a breast of mutton, and squalling of children, the grinding of knives, and the snuff of a candle

[exunt.]

SCENE II. A HANDSOME APARTMENT.

Enter Mirabel and Lamorce.

Lam. To convince me, that your service was something more than good breeding, please to lay out an hour of your company upon my desire, as you have already upon my necessity.

Mir. Your desire, madam, has only prevented my request : my hours ! make 'em yours, madam, eleven, twelve, one, two, three, and all that belong to those happy minutes.

Lam. But I must trouble you, sir, to dismiss your retinue, because an equipage at my door, at this time of night, will not be consistent with my reputation.

Mir. By all means, madam, all but one little boy—Here, page, order my coach and servants home, and do you stay ; 'tis a foolish country boy, that knows nothing but innocence.

Lam. Innocence, sir ? I should be sorry if you made any sinister constructions of my freedom.

Mir. O madam, I must not pretend to remark upon any body's freedom, having so entirely forfeited my own.

Lam. Well, sir, 'twere convenient towards our easy correspondence, that we entered into a free confidence of each other, by a mutual declaration of what we are, and what we think of one another.—Now, sir, what are you ?

Mir. In three words, madam—I am a gentleman, I have five hundred pounds in my pocket, and a clean shirt on.

Lam. And your name is—

Mir. Mustapha —Now, madam, the inventory of your fortunes.

Lam. My name is Lamorce ; my birth noble ; I was married young, to a proud, rude, sullen, impetu-

ous fellow ; the husband spoiled the gentleman ; crying ruined my face, till at last I took heart, leaped out of a window, got away to my friends, sued my tyrant, and recovered my fortune—I lived from fifteen to twenty to please a husband ; from twenty to forty I'm resolved to please myself, and from thence upwards I'll humour the world.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha, I rejoice in your good fortune with all my heart.

Lam. O, now I think on't, Mr. Mustapha, you have got the finest ring there, I could scarcely believe it right, pray let me see it.

Mir. Hum ! Yes, madam, 'tis, 'tis right—but, but, but, but, but it was given me by my mother, an old family ring, madam, an old-fashioned family ring.

Lam. Ay, sir—If you can entertain yourself for a moment, I'll wait on you immediately. [*exit.*]

Mir. Certainly the stars were in a strange intriguing humour when I was born—Ay, this night should I have had a bride in my arms, and that I should like well enough : but what should I have to-morrow night ? The same. And what next night ? The same. And what next night ? The very same. Soup for breakfast, soup for dinner, soup for supper, and soup for breakfast again.—But here's variety. (*runs towards the door. Enter four Bravos with Lamorce, Mirabel starts back.*) She comes, she comes—Hum, hum—Bitch—Murdered, murdered, to be sure ! The cursed strumpet ! To make me send away my servants—Nobody near me ! These cut-throats always make sure work. What shall I do ? I have but one way. (*aside.*) Are these gentlemen your relations, madam ?

Lam. Yes, sir.

Mir. Gentlemen, your most humble servant : sir, your most faithful ; yours, sir, with all my heart :

your most obedient—come, gentlemen. (*salutes all round*) please to sit—no ceremony, next the lady, pray, sir. (*all sit.*)

Lam. Well, sir, and how d'ye like my friends?

Mir. O, madam, the most finished gentlemen! I was never more happy in good company in my life; I suppose, sir, you have travelled?

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir.

Mir. Which way, may I presume?

1 *Bra.* In a western barge, sir.

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! very pretty; facetious, pretty gentleman!

Lam. Ha, ha, ha! sir, you have got the prettiest ring upon your finger there——

Mir. Ah! madam, 'tis at your service, with all my heart. (*offerin'g the ring.*)

Lam. By no means, sir, a family ring! (*takes it.*)

Mir. No matter, madam, seven hundred pounds, by this light. (*aside.*)

2 *Bra.* Pray, sir, what's o'clock?

Mir. Hum! sir, I have left my watch at home.

2 *Bra.* I thought I saw the string of it just now——

Mir. Od's my life, sir, I beg your pardon; here it is—but it don't go. (*puts it up.*)

Lam. O dear, sir, an English watch; Tompion's, I presume.

Mir. D'ye like it, madam?—no ceremony—'tis at your service, with all my heart and soul—Tompion's! Hang ye. (*aside.*)

1 *Bra.* But, sir, above all things, I admire the fashion and make of your sword-hilt.

Mir. I'm mighty glad you like it, sir.

1 *Bra.* Will you part with it, sir?

Mir. I won't sell it.

1 *Bra.* Not sell it, sir?

Mir. No, gentlemen—but I'll bestow it with all my heart. *(offers it.)*

1 Bra. O, sir, we rob you.

Mir. That you do, I'll be sworn. *(aside)* I have another at home, pray, sir—Gentlemen, you're too modest; have I any thing else that you fancy?—sir, will you do me a favour? *(to the first Bravo)* I am extremely in love with that wig which you wear; will you do me the favour to change with me?

1 Bra. Lookye, sir, this is a family wig, and I would not part with it; but if you like it—

Mir. Sir, your most humble servant *(change wigs.)*

1 Bra. Madam, your most humble slave.

(goes up foppishly to the Lady, and salutes her.)

2 Bra. The fellow's very liberal; shall we murder him? *(apart.)*

1 Bra. No, no! I want but a handsome pretence to quarrel with him, for you know we must act like gentlemen. Here, some wine—*(wine brought)* Sir, for your good health. *(pulls Mirabel by the nose.)*

Mir. Oh! sir, your most humble servant; a pleasant frolic enough, to drink a man's health, and pull him by the nose: ha, ha, ha! the pleasantest pretty-humoured gentleman.

Lam. Help the gentleman to a glass. *(Mir. drinks.)*

1 Bra. How d'ye like the wine, sir?

Mir. Very good o'the kind, sir: but I tell ye, what, I find we're all inclined to be frolicsome, and 'egad, for my own part, I was never more disposed to be merry; let's make a night on't, ha!—This wine is pretty, but I have such Burgundy at home.—Lookye, gentlemen, let me send for half a dozen flasks of my Burgundy; I defy France to match it;—'Twill make us all life, all air, pray, gentlemen.

2 Bra. Eh! Shall us have his Burgundy? *(apart.)*

1 Bra. Yes faith, we'll have all we can: here call

up the gentleman's servant (*apart*)—What think you, Lamorce?

Lam. Yes, yes. (*apart*) Your servant is a foolish country boy, sir; he understands nothing but innocence.

Mir. Ay, ay, madam.—Here, page!

Enter Oriana.

Take this key, and go to my butler, order him to send half a dozen flasks of the red Burgundy, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste; I long to entertain my friends here, my very good friends.

Omnes. Ah, dear sir!

I Bra. Here, child, take a glass of wine—Your master and I have changed wigs, honey, in a frolic. Where had you this pretty hoy, honest Mustapha?

Ori. Mustapha!

Mir. Out of Picardy——this is the first errand he has made for me, and if he does it right, I'll encourage him.

Ori. The red Burgundy, sir?

Mir. The red, marked a thousand; and be sure you make haste.

Ori. I shall, sir.

[*exit.*

I Bra. Sir, you were pleased to like my wig, have you any fancy for my coat?—Lookye, sir, it has served a great many honest gentlemen very faithfully.

Mir. The insolence of these dogs is beyond their cruelty.

(*aside.*

Lam. You're melancholy, sir.

Mir. Only concerned, madam, that I should have no servant here but this little boy—he'll make some confounded blunder, I'll lay my life on't, I would not be disappointed of my wine for the universe.

Lam. He'll do well enough, sir; but supper's ready; will you please to eat a bit. sir

Mir. O, madam, I never had a better stomach in my life.

Lam. Come then—we have nothing but a plate of soup.

Mir. Ah! The marriage soup I could dispense with now. *[aside ; exit, handing the Lady.]*

2 Bra. Shall we despatch him?

3 Bra. To be sure. I think he knows me.

1 Bra. Ay, ay, dead men tell no tales ; I han't the confidence to look a man in the face after I have done him an injury, therefore we'll murder him. *[exeunt.]*

SCENE III. OLD MIRABEL'S HOUSE.

Enter Duretête.

Dur. My friend has forsaken me, I have abandoned my mistress, my time lies heavy upon my hands, and my money burns in my pocket—But now I think on't, my myrmidoms are upon duty to-night ; I'll fairly stroll down to the guard, and nod away the night with my honest lieutenant over a flask of wine, a good story, and a pipe of tobacco. *(going off.)*

Enter Bisarre.

Bis. Who comes there ? Stand !

Dur. Hey dey, now she's turned dragoon.

Bis. Lookye, sir, I'm told you intend to travel again.—I design to wait on you as far as Italy.

Dur. Then I'll travel into Wales.

Bis. Wales ! What country's that ?

Dur. The land of mountains, child, where you're never out of the way, 'cause there's no such thing as a high road.

Bis. Rather always in a high road, 'cause you travel all upon hills ;—but be't as it will, I'll jog along with you.

Dur. But we intend to sail to the East Indies

Bis. East or west, 'tis all one to me; I'm tight and light, and the fitter for sailing.

Dur. But suppose we take through Germany, and drink hard?

Bis. Suppose I take through Germany, and drink harder than you?

Dur. 'Sdeath, woman, will you go to the guard with me and smoke a pipe?

Bis. Allons done!

Dur. The devil's in the woman.—Suppose I hang myself.

Bis. There I'll leave you.

Dur. And a happy riddance; the gallows is welcome.

Bis. Hold, hold, sir! (*catches him by the arm as he is going*) one word before we part.

Dur. Let me go, madam—

Bis. Stir, if you dare.—Come, sir, stand there now, and ogle me. (*he frowns upon her*) Now a languished sigh! (*he groans*) Now run and take my fan—faster. (*he runs and takes it up*) Now play with it handsomely.

Dur. Ay, ay. (*he tears it to pieces.*)

Bis. Hold, hold, dear, humorous coxcomb; captain, spare my fan, and I'll—Why, you rude, inhuman monster, don't you expect to pay for this?

Dur. Yes, madam, there's twelve pence; for that is the price on't.

Bis. Sir, it cost a guinea.

Dur. Well, madam, you shall have the sticks again.

[*throws them to her, and exit.*]

Bis. Ha, ha, ha! ridiculous, below my concern. I must follow him, however, to know if he can give me any news of Oriana
[exit.]

SCENE IV. LAMORCE'S LODGINGS.

Enter Mirabel.

Mir. Bloody hell-hounds, I overheard you!—Was not I two hours ago the happy, gay, rejoicing, Mirabel? How did I plume my hopes in a fair coming prospect of a long scene of years! Life courted me with all the charms of vigour, youth, and fortune; and to be torn away from all my promised joys is more than death; the manner too, by villains.—O my Oriana, this very moment might have blessed me in thy arms, and my poor boy! the innocent boy!—Confusion!—But hush! they come: I must dissimble still—

Enter the four Bravos.

No news of my wine, gentlemen?

1 *Bra.* No, sir; I believe your country booby has lost himself, and we can wait no longer for't—True, sir, you're a pleasant gentleman; but I suppose you understand our business.

Mir. Sir, I may go near to guess at your employments; you, sir, are a lawyer, I presume, you a physician, you a scrivener, and you a stock jobber.—All cut-throats, 'egad. *(aside.*

4 *Bra.* Sir, I am a broken officer; I was cashiered at the head of the army for a coward; so I took up the trade of murder to retrieve the reputation of my courage.

3 *Bra.* I am a soldier too, and would serve my king; but I don't like the quarrel, and I have more honour than to fight in a bad cause.

2 *Bra.* I was bred a gentleman, and I have no estate, but I must have my whore and my bottle, through the prejudice of education.

1 *Bra.* I am a ruffian too, by the prejudice of education: I was bred a butcher. In short, sir, if you

wine had come, we might have trifled a little longer.
—Come, sir, which sword will you die by? mine,
sir?

2 *Bra.* Or mine? *(draws.)*

3 *Bra.* Or mine? *(draws.)*

4 *Bra.* Or mine? *(draws.)*

Mir. I scorn to beg my life; but to be butchered
thus! *(knocking)* O, there's the wine—this mo-
ment for my life or death.

Enter Oriana.

Lost, for ever lost!—Where's the wine, child?

(faintly.)

Ori. Coming up, sir.

(stamps.)

*Enter Duret le and six of the grand Musqueteers;
the Ruffians drop their swords; exit Oriana.*

Mir. The wine, the wine, the wine! Youth, plea-
sure, fortune, days, and years, are now my own
again.—Ah my dear friends, did not I tell you this
wine would make me merry?—Dear captain, these
gentlemen are the best natured, facetious, witty
creatures that ever you knew.

Enter Lamorce.

Lam. Is the wine come, sir?

Mir. O yes, madam, the wine is come—see
there! *(pointing to the soldiers)* Your ladyship has
got a very fine ring upon your finger.

Lam. Sir, 'tis at your service.

Mir. O ho! is it so? Thou dear seven hundred
pounds, thou'rt welcome home again with all my
heart—Ad's my life, madam, you have got the finest
built watch there! Tompion's, I presume?

Lam. Sir, you may wear it.

Mir. O, madam, by no means; 'tis too much—
Rob you of all! *(takes it from her)* Good, dear, time,
thou'rt a precious thing; I'm glad I have retrieved
thee. *(puts it up)* What, my friends neglected all

this while! Gentlemen, you'll pardon my complaisance to the lady—How now?—Is it civil to be so out of humour at my entertainment, and I so pleased with yours?—Captain, you're surprised at all this; but we're in our frolics, you must know.—Some wine here.

Enter Servant, with wine.

Come, captain, this worthy gentleman's health.

(tweaks the first Bravo by the nose; he roars.)

But now, where—where's my dear deliverer, my boy, my charming boy?

1 *Bra.* I hope some of our crew below stairs have despatched him.

Mir. Villain, what say'st thou? Despatched! I'll have ye all tortured, racked, torn to pieces alive, if you have touched my boy.—Here, page! page! page!
(runs out)

Dur. Here, gentlemen, be sure you secure those fellows.

1 *Bra.* Yes, sir, we know you and your guard will be very civil to us.

Dur. Now for you, madam—He, he, he!—I'm so pleased to think that I shall be revenged of one woman before I die."

Dug. Take 'em to justice. *(guards carry off Bravos.)*

Enter Old Mirabel, Dugard, and Bizarre.

O. *Mir.* Robin, Robin, where's Bob? where's my boy?—What is this the lady? a pretty vixen, faith!

Harkye, child, because my son was so civil as to oblige you with a coach, I'll treat you with a cart. —indeed I will.

Dug. Ay, madam,—and you shall have a swinging equipage, three or four thousand footmen at your heels at least.

Dur. No less becomes her quality

Bis. Faugh! the monster

Dur. Monster! ay, you're all a little monstrous, let me tell you.

Re-enter Mirabel.

O. Mir. Ah, my dear Bob, art thou safe, man?

Mir. No, no, sir, I'm ruined! the saver of my life is lost!

O. Mir. No, he came and brought us the news.

Mir. But where is he?

Re-enter Oriana.

Ha! (*runs and embraces her*) my dear preserver, what shall I do to recompense your trust? Father, friends, gentlemen, behold the youth that has relieved me from the most ignominious death.—~~Com-~~mand me, child; before you all, before my late so kind indulgent stars, I swear to grant whate'er you ask.

Ori. To the same stars, indulgent now to me, I will appeal as to the justice of my claim; I shall demand but what was mine before—the just performance of your contract to Oriana. (*discovers herself.*

Omnes. Oriana!

Ori. In this disguise I resolved to follow you abroad, counterfeited the letter that got me into your service; and so, by this strange turn of fate, I became the instrument of your preservation.

Dur. Mirabel, you're caught.

Mir. Caught! I scorn the thought of imposition! Caught! No, 'tis my voluntary act; this was no human stratagem; but by my providential stars, designed to show the dangers wandering youth incurs by the pursuit of an unlawful love, to plunge me headlong in the snares of vice, and then to free me by the hands of virtue: here on my knees I humbly beg my fair preserver's pardon; my thanks are needless, for myself I owe. And now for ever do protest me yours.

O. Mir. Tall, all, di, dall. (*sings*) Kiss me, daughter—no, you shall kiss me first, (*to Lamorce*) for you're the cause on't. Well, Bizarre, what say you to the captain?

Bis. I like the beast well enough; but I don't understand his paces so well as to venture him in a strange road.

O. Mir. But marriage is so beaten a path that you can't go wrong.

Bis. Ay, 'tis so beaten, that the way is spoiled.

Dur. There is but one thing should make me thy husband—I could marry thee to-day for the privilege of beating thee to-morrow.

O. Mir. Come, come, you may agree for all this. *Mr. Dugard*, are not you pleased with this?

Dug. So pleased, that if I thought it might secure your son's affection to my sister, I would double her fortune.

Mir. Fortune! has she not given me mine? my life, estate, my all, and, what is more, her virtuous self.—Behold the foil (*pointing to Lamorce*) that sets this brightness off! (*to Oriana*) Here, view the pride (*to Oriana*) and scandal of the sex. (*to Lamorce*.

What liberty can be so tempting there, (*to Lam.* As a soft, virtuous, amorous, bondage here?

(*to Oriana.*

THE CRITIC;

OR,

A Tragedy Rehearsed.

A DRAMATIC PIECE,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

CORRECTLY GIVEN,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

With Remarks.



NEW-YORK :

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REMARKS.



THIS production, from the pen of the Rt. Hon. R. B. SHERIDAN, is one of those dramatical pieces which hold a high rank in the estimation of the public, and is perhaps the best effort of riculture that has hitherto appeared against those who have imagined they possessed talents for theatrical composition. The character of *Sir Fretful Plagiary* is highly drawn, and his foibles and peculiarities are painted to the life. The various turns in his speeches are exceedingly natural for a person in his situation ; and *Dangle*, with *Sneer* at his elbow, contrives to keep him in continual perturbation. The *Puffs*, too, of this scheming age, who were never more numerous or importunate, are justly lashed in the ridicule bestowed by our witty author.

The vein of original humour which pervades the whole piece, notwithstanding its acrimonious animadversions, cannot fail to raise a pleasant laugh ; but the political and other allusions require alteration to adapt it for representation at different periods of time.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



As originally performed

Dangle	Mr. Dodd.
Sueer	Mr. Palmer.
Sir Fretful Plagiary	Mr. Parsons.
Under Prompter	Mr. Phillimore.
Puff	Mr. King.
Mrs. Dangle	Mrs. Hopkins.



Characters of the Tragedy

Lord Burleigh	Mr. Moody
Governor of Tilbury Fort	Mr. Wroughton
Earl of Leicester	Mr. Farren.
Sir Walter Raleigh	Mr. Burton.
Sir Christopher Hatton	Mr. Waldron.
Master of the Horse	Mr. Kenny.
Beefscater	Mr. Wright.
Justice	Mr. Packer.
Son	Mr. Lamash.
Constable	Mr. Fawcett.
Thames	Mr. Gaudry.
Don Ferolo Whiskerandos	Mr. Bannister, jr.
First Niece	Miss Collet.
Second Niece	Miss Kirby.
Justice's Lady	Mrs. Johnston.
Confidant	Mrs. Bradshaw.
Tilborina	Miss Pope.
<i>Guards, Constables, Serrants, Chorus, Drivers, Attendants, &c. &c.</i>	

THE CRITIC.



ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

Mr. and Mrs. Dangle at breakfast, reading newspapers.

Dang. (reading) 'BRUTUS to Lord North.'—'Letter the second on the state of the army.'—Pshaw! 'To the first L—dash D of the A—dash Y.'—'Genuine extract of a letter from St. Kitt's.'—'Coxheath intelligence.'—'It is now confidently asserted that Sir Charles Hardy.'—Pshaw!—Nothing but about the fleet and the nation!—and I hate all politics but the theatrical politics.—Where's the Morning Chronicle?

Mrs. D. Yes, that's your Gazette.

Dang. So, here we have it; 'Theatrical intelligence extraordinary.—We hear there is a new tragedy in rehearsal at Drury-lane Theatre, call'd the Spanish Armada, said to be written by Mr. Puff, a gentleman well known in the theatrical world. If we may allow ourselves to give credit to the report of the performers, who, truth to say, are but indifferent judges, this piece abounds with the most striking and received beauties of modern composition.'

—So !—I am very glad my friend Puff's tragedy is in such forwardness.—Mrs. Dangle, my dear, you will be very glad to hear that Puff's tragedy——

Mrs. D. Lord, Mr. Dangle, why will you plague me about such nonsense ?—Now the plays are begun I shall have no peace.—Isn't it sufficient to make yourself ridiculous by your passion for the theatre, without continually teasing me to join you ? Why can't you ride your hobby-horse without desiring to place me on a pillion behind you, Mr. Dangle ?

Dang. Nay, my dear, I was only going to read—

Mrs. D. I have no patience with you !—haven't you made yourself the jest of all your acquaintance by your interference in matters where you have no business ? Are not you called a theatrical Quidnunc, and a mock Mecænas to second-hand authors ?

Dang. True ; my power with the managers is pretty notorious ; but is it no credit to have applications from all quarters for my interest ?—From lords to recommend fiddlers, from ladies to get boxes, from authors to get answers, and from actors to get engagements.

Mrs. D. Yes, truly ; you have contrived to get a share in all the plague and trouble of theatrical property, without the profit, or even the credit of the abuse that attends it.

Dang. I am sure, Mrs. Dangle, you are no loser by it, however ; you have all the advantages of it ;—mightn't you, last winter, have had the reading of the new pantomime a fortnight previous to its performance ? And didn't my friend, Mr. Smatter, dedicate his last farce to you, at my particular request, Mrs. Dangle ?

Mrs. D. Yes ; but wasn't the farce damn'd, Mr. Dangle ? And to be sure it is extremely pleasant to have one's house made the motley rendezvous of all

the lackeys of literature:—The very high change of trading authors and jobbing critics!

Dang. Mrs. Dangle, you will not easily persuade me that there is no credit or importance in being at the head of a band of critics, who take upon them to decide for the whole town, whose opinion and patronage all writers solicit, and whose recommendation no manager dares refuse!

Mrs. D. Ridiculous!—Both managers and authors of the least merit, laugh at your pretensions—The public is their critic—without whose fair approbation they know no play can rest on the stage, and with whose applause they welcome such attacks as yours, and laugh at the malice of them, where they can't at the wit.

Dang. Very well, madam—very well.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sneer, sir, to wait on you.

Dang. O, show Mr. Sneer up. [*exit Servant*]
Plague on't, now we must appear loving and affectionate, or Sneer will hitch us into a story.

Mrs. D. With all my heart; you can't be more ridiculous than you are.

Dang. You are enough to provoke——

Enter Mr. Sneer.

—Ha! my dear Sneer, I am vastly glad to see you. My dear, here's Mr. Sneer. Mr. Sneer, my dear—my dear, Mr. Sneer.

Mrs. D. Good morning to you, sir.

Dang. Mrs. Dangle and I have been diverting ourselves with the papers.—Pray, Sneer, won't you go to Drury-lane Theatre the first night of Puff's tragedy?

Sneer. Yes; but I suppose one sha'n't be able to get in. But here, Dangle. I have brought you two

pieces, one of which you must exert yourself to make some of the managers accept, I can tell you that, for 'tis written by a person of consequence.

Dang. So! now my plagues are beginning.

Sneer. Ay, I'm glad of it, for now you'll be happy. Why, my dear Dangle, it is a pleasure to see how you enjoy your volunteer fatigue, and your solicited solicitations.

Dang. It's a great trouble—yet, 'egad, its pleasant too.—Why, sometimes of a morning, I have a dozen people call on me at breakfast time, whose faces I never saw before, nor ever desire to see again.

Sneer. That must be very pleasant, indeed!

Dang. And not a week but I receive fifty letters, and not a line in them about any business of my own.

Sneer. An amusing correspondence!

Dang. (*reading*) 'Bursts into tears, and exit.' What, is this a tragedy?

Sneer. No, that's a genteel comedy, not a translation—only taken from the French; it is written in a style which they have lately tried to run down; the true sentimental, and nothing ridiculous in it from the beginning to the end.*

Mrs. D. Well, if they had kept to that, I should not have been such an enemy to the stage: there was some edification to be got from those pieces, Mr. Sneer!

Sneer. I am quite of your opinion, Mrs. Dangle; the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment.

Mrs. D. It would have been more to the credit of the managers to have kept it in the other line.

Sneer. Undoubtedly, madam ; and hereafter perhaps to have had it recorded, that in the midst of a luxurious and dissipated age, they preserved two houses in the capital, where the conversation was always moral at least, if not entertaining !

Dang. But what have we here ?—This seems a very odd—

Sneer. O that's a comedy, on a very new plan ; replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral ! You see it is call'd 'The Reformed House-breaker ; where, by the mere force of humour, house-breaking is put into so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dang. 'Egad, this is new indeed !

Sneer. Yes ; it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society are subjects unworthy the notice of the comic muse, who should be taught to stoop only at the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity—gibbetting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenies in two. In short, his idea is to dramatise the penal laws, and make the stage a court of ease to the Old Bailey.

Dang. It is truly moral.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dang. Beg him to walk up.—[*exit Servant*] Now, Mrs. Dangle, sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. D. I confess he is a favourite of mine, because every body else abuses him.

Sneer. Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dang. But, 'egad, he allows no merit to any au-

thor but himself, that's the truth on't—though he's my friend.

Sneer. Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six-and-thirty: and ~~then~~ the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dang. Very true, 'egad—though he's my friend

Sneer. Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism.

Dang. There's no denying it—though he is my friend.

Sneer. You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you?

Dang. O yes, he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer. Well, and you think it execrable, don't you?

Dang. Why, between ourselves, 'egad I must own—though he's my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here (*aside*)—finished and most admirable perform—

Sir F. (*without*) Mr. Sneer with him, did you say?

Enter Sir Fretful.

Ah, my dear friend!—'Egad, we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, sir Fretful, admirable!

Sneer. You never did any thing beyond it, sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir F. You make me extremely happy; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours—and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. D. They are only laughing at you, sir Fretful; for it was but just now that——

Dang. Mrs. Dangle! Ah, sir Fretful, you know **Mrs. Dangle.**—My friend Sneer was rallying just now—He knows how she admires you, and——

Sir F. O Lord, I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to——A damned double-faced fellow! (aside.)

Dang. Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humoured——

Sir F. O, I know——

Dang. He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.—

Sir F. No, 'egad!—or I should wonder how he came by it. (aside.)

Dang. But, sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet?—or can I be of any service to you?

Sir F. No, no, I thank you; I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you though—I sent it to the manager of Covent-garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer. I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury-lane.

Sir F. O lud! no—never send a play there while I live—hark ye! (whispers Sneer.)

Sneer. Writes himself!—I know he does—

Sir F. I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy!

Sneer. I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir F. Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer. What, they may steal from them. hey, my dear Plagiary?

Sir F. Steal!—to be sure they may; and, 'egad, serve your best thoughts as gipseys do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer. But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he, you know, never—

Sir F. That's no security.—A dexterous plagiarist may do any thing.—Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer. That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir F. And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole—

Dang. If it succeeds.

Sir F. Ay,—but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer. I'll tell you how you may hurt him more—

Sir F. How?—

Sneer. Swear he wrote it.

Sir F. Plague on't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill.—I believe you want to take away my character as an author!

Sneer. Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir F. Hey!—Sir!

Dang. O, you know, he never means what he says

Sir F. Sincerely then—you do like the piece?

Sneer. Wonderfully!

Sir F. But come now, there must be something

that you think might be mended, hey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dang. Why faith, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part to—

Sir F. With most authors it is just so, indeed; they are in general strangely tenacious.—But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion?

Sneer. Very true. Why then, though I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection, which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir F. Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer. I think it wants incident.

Sir F. Good God!—you surprise me!—wants incident!—

Sneer. Yes; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir F. Good God!—Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference.—But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you?

Dang. Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer.—I think the plot quite sufficient; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest any thing, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.

Sir F. Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dang. No, I don't, upon my word.

Sir F. Yes, yes, you do, upon my soul—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you—No, no, it don't fall off.

Dang. Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light?

Mrs. D. No, indeed, I did not—I did not see a fault in any part of the play from the beginning to the end.

Sir. F. Upon my soul, the women are the best judges after all!

Mrs. D. Or, if I made any objections, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece! but that I was afraid it was, on the whole, a little too long.

Sir. F. Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out?

Mrs. D. O lud! no.—I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir F. Then I am very happy—very happy indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play:—I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste; but on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. D. Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir F. O, if Mr. Dangle read it! that's quite another affair!—But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and an half, I'll undertake to read you the whole from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. D. I hope to see it on the stage next.

Dang. Well, sir Fretful. I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticism as you do of ours.—

Sir F. The newspapers!—Sir, they are the most villanous—licentious—abominable—infernal—Not that I ever read them—No—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dang. You are quite right—for it certainly must

hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir F. No!—quite to the contrary; their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things.—An author's reputation is only in danger from their support

Sneer. Why that's true—and that attack now on you the other day——

Sir F. What? where?

Dang. Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday; it was completely ill-natured to be sure.

Sir F. O, so much the better—Ha! ha! ha! I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Dang. Certainly it is only to be laughed at; for—

Sir F. You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you?

Sneer. Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious—

Sir F. O lud, no!—anxious,—not I,—not the least—I—But one may as well hear, you know.

Dang. Sneer, do you recollect?—Make out something.

Sneer. I will, (*to Dangle*)—Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir F. Well, and pray now—Not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say?

Sneer. Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever; though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir F. Ha! ha! ha!—very good!

Sneer. That as to comedy you have not one idea of your own he believes, even in your commonplace-book, where stray jokes, and pilfered witticisms, are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost-and-stolen office.

Sir. F. Ha! ha! ha!—very pleasant

Sneer. Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste:—But that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sediments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir F. Ha! ha!

Sneer. In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms!

Sir F. Ha, ha!

Sneer. That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour springs would a ground of linsey-wolsey; while your imitations of Shakspeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard of the original.

Sir F. Ha!—

Sneer. In short, that even the finest passages you steal are of no service to you; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating! so that they lie on the surface, like lumps of mail on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize!

Sir F. (after great agitation)—Now another person would be vexed at this.

Sneer. Oh! but I wouldn't have told you, only to divert you.

Sir F. I know it—I am diverted,—Ha! ha! ha! not the least invention!—Ha, ha, ha! very good!—very good!

Sneer. Yes—no genius! Ha, ha, ha!

Dung. A severe rogue! ha, ha, ha! But you are quite right, sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir F. To be sure—for if there is any thing to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it, and if it is abuse,—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damned good natured friend or another!

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

Dang. That's true—I shall certainly be at home. [*exit servant*] Now, sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer—Egad, Mr. Puff's your man.

Sir F. Pshaw! sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it?

Dang. True I had forgot that.—But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer—

Sir F. Zounds! no, Mr. Dangle, don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least?

Dang. Nay, I only thought—

Sir F. And let me tell you Mr. Dangle, 'tis damned affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt, when I tell you I am not.

Sneer. But why so warm, sir Fretful?

Sir F. Gadslife! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle; how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damned nonsense you have been repeating to me!—and let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and then your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it—with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. [*exit.*

Sneer. Ha, ha, ha! Poor sir Fretful! Now will he

go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

Dang. I'll answer for't, he'll thank you for desiring it.—I faith, Sneer, though, I am afraid we were a little too severe on sir Fretful—though he is my friend.

Sneer. Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer, is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor neither deserves quarter nor pity.

Dang. That's true 'egad!—though he's my friend

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Puff, sir!

Dang. My dear Puff!

Enter Puff.

Puff. My dear Dangle how is it with you?

Dang. Mr. Sneer, give me leave to introduce Mr. Puff to you.

Puff. Mr. Sneer is this? Sir, he is a gentleman whom I have long panted for the honour of knowing—a gentleman whose critical talents and transcendent judgment—

Sneer. Dear sir—

Dang. Nay, don't be modest, Sneer; my friend Puff only talks to you in the style of his profession.

Sneer. His profession!

Puff. Yes, sir; I make no secret of the trade I follow—among friends and brother authors, Dangle knows I love to be frank on the subject, and to advertise myself vivâ voce.—I am, sir, a practitioner in panegyric, or to speak more plainly—a professor of the art of puffing, at your service—or any body else's.

Sneer. Sir, you are very obliging!—I believe, Mr. Puff, I have often admired your talents in the daily prints.

Puff. Yes, sir, I flatter myself I do as much business in that way as any six of the fraternity in town—Devilish hard work all the summer—Friend Dangle! never worked harder!—But harkye,—the winter managers were a little sore, I believe.

Dung. No—I believe they took it all in good part.

Puff. Ay!—Then that must have been affectation in them; for, 'egad, there were some of the attacks which there was no laughing at!

Sneer. Ay, the humorous ones—But I should think, Mr. Puff, that authors would in general be able to do this sort of work for themselves.

Puff. Why, yes—but in a clumsy way,—Besides, we look on that as an encroachment, and so take the opposite side.—I dare say now you conceive half the very civil paragraphs and advertisements you see, to be written by the parties concerned, or their friends.—No such thing—Nine out of ten, manufactured by me in the way of business.

Sneer. Indeed!

Puff. Even the auctioneers now—the auctioneers, I say, though the rogues have lately got some credit for their language—not an article of the merit their's!—take them out of their pulpits, and they are as dull as catalogues!—No, sir;—'twas I first enrich'd their style—'twas I first taught them to crowd their advertisements with panegyrical superlatives, each epithet rising above the other—Like the bidders in their own auction rooms! From me they learn'd to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor: by me too their inventive faculties were called forth.—Yes, sir, by me they were instructed to clothe ideal walls with gratuitous

—to insinuate obsequious rivulets into visionary gkves—to teach cautious shrubs to nod their approbation of the 'grateful soil! or on emergencies to raise upstart oaks, where there never had been an acorn to create a delightful vicinage without the assistance of a neighbour; or fix the temple of Hygeia in the fens of Lincolnshire?

Dang. I am sure you have done them infinite service; for now, when a gentleman is ruined, he parts with his house with some credit.

Sneer. But pray, Mr. Puff, what first put you on exercising your talents in this way?

Puff. 'Egad, sir—sheer necessity—the proper parent of an art so nearly allied to invention: you must know, Mr. Sneer, that from the first time I tryed my hand at an advertisement, my success was such, that for some time after, I led a most extraordinary life indeed!

Sneer. How, pray?

Puff. Sir, I supported myself two years entirely by my misfortunes.

Sneer. By your misfortunes?

Puff. Yes, sir, assisted by long sickness, and other occasional disorders; and a very comfortable living I had of it.

Sneer. From sickness and misfortunes!

Puff. Harkye! By advertisements, 'To the charitable and humane!' and 'to those whom Providence hath blessed with affluence!'

Sneer. Oh,—I understand you.

Puff. And, in truth, I deserved what I got; for I suppose never man went through such a series of calamities in the same space of time!—Sir, I was five times made a bankrupt, and reduced from a state of affluence, by a train of unavoidable misfortune! then, sir, though a very industrious tradesman, I was twice burnt out, and lost my little all both

times!—I lived upon those fires a month.—I soon after was confined by a most excruciating disorder, and lost the use of my limbs!—That told very well; for I had the case strongly attested, and went about collecting the subscriptions myself.

Dang. 'Egad, I believe that was when you first called on me—

Puff. What—in November last?—O no!—I was, when I called on you, a close prisoner in the Marshal-sea, for a debt benevolently contracted to serve a friend!—I was afterwards twice tapped for a dropsy, which declined into a very profitable consumption!—I was then reduced to—O no—then, I became a widow, with six helpless children,—after having had eleven husbands pressed, and being left every time eight months gone with child, and without money to get me into an hospital!

Sneer. And you bore all with patience, I make no doubt?

Puff. Why, yes,—though I made some occasional attempts at *felo de se*; but, as I did not find those rash actions answer, I left off killing myself very soon.—Well, sir,—at last, what with bankruptcies, fires, gouts, dropsies, imprisonments, and other valuable calamities, having got together a pretty handsome sum, I determined to quit a business which had always gone rather against my conscience, and in a more liberal way still to indulge my talents for fiction and embellishment, through my favourite channels of diurnal communication—and so, sir, you have my history.

Sneer. Most obligingly communicative, indeed; and your confession, if published, might certainly serve the cause of true charity, by rescuing the most useful channels of appeal to benevolence from the cant of imposition.—But surely, Mr. Puff, there is no great mystery in your present profession?

Puff. Mystery ! sir, I will take upon me to say the matter was never scientifically treated, nor reduced to rule before.

Sneer. Reduced to rule ?

Puff. O lud, sir ! you are very ignorant, I am afraid. --Yes, sir,—Puffing is of various sorts :—the principal are, the Puff direct—the Puff preliminary—the Puff collateral—the Puff collusive—and the Puff oblique, or Puff by implication.—These all assume, as circumstances require, the various forms of Letter to the Editor—Occasional Anecdote—Impartial Critique—Observation from Correspondent,—or Advertisement from the Party.

Sneer. The Puff direct I can conceive.

Puff. O yes, that's simple enough,—for instance—A new comedy or farce is to be produced at one of the theatres (though by-the-bye they don't bring out half what they ought to do :) the author suppose Mr Smatter, or Mr. Dapper—or any particular friend of mine—very well ; the day before it is to be performed, I write an account of the manner in which it was received—I have the plot from the author,—and only add—Characters strongly drawn — highly coloured—hand of a master—fund of genuine humour—mine of invention—neat dialogue—attic salt ! Then for the performance—Mr. Dodd was astonishingly great in the character of sir Harry ! That universal and judicious actor, Mr. Palmer, perhaps never appeared to more advantage than in the colonel ; but it is not in the power of language to do justice to Mr. King !—Indeed he more than merited those repeated bursts of applause which he drew from a most brilliant and judicious audience ! As to the scenery—The miraculous powers of Mr. De Louthburgh's pencil are universally acknowledged !—In short, we are at a loss which to admire

most,—the unrivalled genius of the author, the great attention and liberality of the managers—the wonderful abilities of the painter, or the incredible exertions of all the performers !—

Sneer. That's pretty well, indeed, sir.

Puff. O cool—quite cool—to what I sometimes do.

Sneer. And do you think there are any who are influenced by this ?

Puff. O, lud ! yes, sir ;—the number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed !

Sneer. Well, sir—the Puff preliminary ?

Puff. O that, sir, does well in the form of a caution—In a matter of gallantry now—Sir Flimsy Gossimer wishes to be well with lady Fanny Fête—He applies to me—I open trenches for him with a paragraph in the Morning Post.—It is recommended to the beautiful and accomplished lady F. four stars F dash E to be on her guard against that dangerous character, sir F dash G ; who, however, pleasing and insinuating his manners may be, is certainly not remarkable for the *constancy of his attachments*—in Italics—Here you see, sir Flimsy Gossimer is introduced to the particular notice of lady Fanny—who perhaps never thought of him before—she finds herself publicly cautioned to avoid him, which naturally makes her desirous of seeing him ;—the observation of their acquaintance causes a pretty kind of mutual embarrassment, this produces a sort of sympathy of interest—whilst, if sir Flimsy is unable to improve effectually, he at least gains the credit of having their names mentioned together, by a particular set, and in a particular way,—which, nine times out of ten, is the full accomplishment of modern gallantry.

Dang. 'Egad, Sneer, you will be quite an adept in the business.

Puff Now, sir, the *Puff* collateral is much used as an appendage to advertisements, and may take the form of anecdote—Yesterday, as the celebrated George Bon-Mot was sauntering down St. James's-street, he met the lively lady Mary Myrtle, coming out of the Park,—“ Good God, lady Mary, I'm surprised to meet you in a white jacket,—for I expected never to have seen you, but in a full trimmed uniform and a light-horseman's cap ! ” —“ Heavens, George, where could you have learned that ? ” —“ Why,” replied the wit, “ I just saw a print of you in a new publication called the *Camp Magazine*, which by-the-bye is a devilish clever thing,—and is sold at No. 3, on the right-hand of the way, two doors from the printing-office, the corner of Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, price only one shilling.

Sneer Very ingenious, indeed !

Puff. But the *Puff* collusive is the newest of any ; for it acts in the disguise of determined hostility.—It is much used by bold booksellers and enterprising poets.—An indignant correspondent observes—that the new poem called *Beelzebub's Cotillion*, or *Proserpine's Fête Champêtre*, is one of the most unjustifiable performances he ever read ! The severity with which certain characters are handled is quite shocking ! And as there are many descriptions in it too warmly coloured for female delicacy, the shameful avidity with which this piece is bought by all people of fashion, is a reproach on the taste of the times, and a disgrace to the delicacy of the age !—Here you see the two strongest inducements are held forth ;—First, that nobody ought to read it ;—and, secondly, that every body buys it : on the strength of which, the publisher boldly prints the tenth edition, before he had sold ten of the first ; and then establishes it by threatening himself with the pillory, or absolutely indicting himself for scan. mag. !

Dang. Ha ! ha ! ha !—'egad I know it is so.

Puff. As to the Puff oblique, or Puff by implication, it is too various and extensive to be illustrated by an instance ; it branches into so many varieties that it is the last principal class of the art of puffing—An art which I hope you will now agree with me, is of the highest dignity

Sneer. Sir, I am completely a convert both to the importance and ingenuity of your profession ; and now, sir, there is but one thing which can possibly increase my respect for you, and that is your permitting me to be present this morning at the rehearsal of your new tragedy—

Puff.—Hush, for heaven's sake.—My tragedy !—'Egad Dangle, I take this very ill—you know how apprehensive I am of being known to be the author.

Dang. Faith I would not have told—but it's in the papers, and your name at length—in the Morning Chronicle.

Puff. Ah ! those damn'd editors never can keep a secret !—Well, Mr. Sneer—no doubt you will do me great honour—I shall be infinitely happy—highly flattered—

Dang. I believe it must be near the time—shall we go together ?

Puff. No ; it will not be yet this hour, for they are always late at that theatre : besides, I must meet you there, for I have some little matters here to send to the papers, and a few paragraphs to scribble before I go. (*looking at memorandums*) Here is “ a Conscientious Baker, on the Subject of the Army Bread ;” and “ a Detester of visible Brick-work, in favour of the new invented Stucco ;” both in the style of Junius, and promised for to-morrow.—The Thames Navigation too is at a stand.—Misomud or Anti-shoal must go to work again directly.—Here

too are some political memorandums I see ; ay—To take Paul Jones, and get the Indiamen out of the Shannon—reinforce Byron—compel the Dutch to—so !—I must do that in the evening papers, or reserve it for the Morning Herald, for I know that I have undertaken to-morrow, besides, to establish the unanimity of the fleet in the Public Advertiser, and to shoot Charles Fox in the Morning Post.—So, 'egad, I ha'n't a moment to lose !

Dang. We'll !—we'll meet in the green-room.

[exit severally.]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I. THE THEATRE.

Dangle, Puff, and Snerr, as before the curtain.

Puff. No, no, sir ; what Shakspeare says of actors may be better applied to the purpose of plays ; they ought to be “ the abstract and brief chronicles of the times.” Therefore, when history, and particularly the history of our own country, furnishes any thing like a case in point, to the time in which an author writes, if he knows his own interest, he will take advantage of it ; so, sir, I call my tragedy *The Spanish Armada* ; and hav : laid the scene before *Tilbury Fort*.

Snerr. A most happy thought, certainly !

Dang. 'Egad it was—I told you so—But pray now I don't understand how you have contrived to introduce any love into it.

Puff. Love !—Oh nothing so easy : for it is a received point among poets, that where history gives you a good heroic outline for a play, you may fill up with a little love at your own discretion : in doing which, nine times out of ten you only make up a

deficiency in the private history of the times. Now I rather think I have done this with some success.

Sneer. No scandal about queen Elizabeth, I hope?

Puff. O lud! no, no—I only suppose the governor of Tilbury-Fort's daughter to be in love with the son of the Spanish admiral.

Sneer. O, is that all?

Dang. Excellent, i'faith! I see it at once—But won't this appear rather improbable?

Puff. To be sure it will—but what the plague! a play is not to show occurrences that happen every day, but things just so strange, that though they never did, they might happen.

Sneer. Certainly nothing is unnatural, that is not physically impossible.

Puff. Very true—and for that matter Don Ferolo Whiskerandos—for that's the lover's name, might have been over here in the train of the Spanish ambassador; or Tilburina, for that is the lady's name, might have been in love with him, from having heard his character, or seen his picture; or from knowing that he was the last man in the world she ought to be in love with—or for any other good female reason.—However, sir, the fact is, that though she is but a knight's daughter, *Egad!* she is in love like any princess!—her poor susceptible heart is swayed to and fro, by contending passions like—

Enter Under Prompter.

Under Prom. Sir, the scene is set, and every thing is ready to begin, if you please.—

• *Puff.* 'Egad; then we'll lose no time.

Under Prom. Though I believe, sir, you will find it very short, for all the performers have profited by the kind permission you gave them.

Puff. Hey! what!

Under Prom. You know, sir, you gave them leave to cut out or omit whatever they found heavy or long—

necessary to the plot; and I must own they have taken very liberal advantage of your indulgence.

Puff. Well, well.—They are in general very good judges; and I know I am luxuriant.—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Under Prom. (to Music) Gentlemen, will you play a few bars of something, just to—

Puff. Ay, that's right,—for as we have the scenes and dresses, 'egad, we'll go to't, as if it was the first night's performance; [*exit Under Prompter; Orchestra play; then the bell rings*] Sob! stand clear, gentlemen.—Now you know there will be a cry of down!—down!—hats off!—silence!—Then, up curtain,—and let's see what our painters have done for us.

SCENE I. TILBURY-FORT.

Two Sentinels asleep.

Dang. Tilbury Fort!—very fine indeed!

Puff. Now, what do you think I open with?

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess—

Puff. A clock—

Sneer. A clock!

Puff. Hark! (*clock strikes*) I open with a clock striking, to beget an awful attention in the audience—it also marks the time, which is four o'clock in the morning, and saves a description of the rising sun, and a great deal about gilding the eastern hemisphere.

Dang. But, pray, are the sentinels to be asleep?

Puff. Fast as watchmen.

Unscr. Isn't that odd though at such an alarming crisis?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller things must give way to a striking scene at the opening; that's a rule.—And the case is, that two great men are

coming to this very spot to begin the piece ; now, it is not to be supposed they would open their lips, if these fellows were watching them ; so, ' egad, I must either have sent them off their posts, or set them asleep.

Sneer. O that accounts for it !—But tell us, who are these coming ?—

Puff. These are they—sir Walter Raleigh, and sir Christopher Hatton.—You'll know sir Christopher, by his turning out his toes—famous you know for his dancing. I like to preserve all the little traits of character.—Now attend.

Enter Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir C. . . . now

Sir C. True, gallant Raleigh !—

Dang. What, they had been talking ill : for there

Puff. O yes ; all the way as sir Walter should I beg pardon, gentlemen, (to t

particular friends of mine, one of the most ungrateful of great service to us.—and—for the less induce them whenever any thing his, the more, I think, you

Sir C. True, gallant utter without.

But O, thou champion of me, upon my word.

There is a question which he was not going on.

A question, which I am enough—'tis plain—and I no

What mean these m' ment lost !—

This general muste as you see, sir Christopher did not

Sneer. Pray, " one question for his own information never

Puff. Wh indeed :—his has been a most disingenuous curiosity !

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much obliged

Puff. both.

ter. To be sure, you are. Now then for the

Sir C. and in chief, the earl of Leicester ! who, you

Puff. was no favourite but of the queen's—We left in amazement lost "

Sir Christopher Hatton was famous for dancing well.

Sir C. When I behold
Yon tented plains in martial symmetry
Array'd—When I count o'er yon glittering lines
Of crested warriors,—
When briefly all I hear or see bears stamp
Of martial vigilance, and stern defiance,
I cannot but surmise,—forgive me, friends;
If the conjecture's rash—I cannot but
Surmise—the state some danger apprehends !

Sneer. A very cautious conjecture that.

Puff. Yes, that's his character ; not to give an
down, but on secure grounds—now then.
tain,—and most accomplish'd Christopher.—
for us.

calls him by his Christian name, to
SCENE on the most familiar terms.

Two accomplish'd Christopher, I find

Dang. Tilbury Fort !—whence ? when ? and what ?

Puff. Now, what do you, ks I fain would learn.

Sneer. Faith, I can't guess, y friends, scarce two re-

Puff. A clock—

Sneer. A clock !

Puff. Hark ! (clock strikes) have closed their course,
striking, to beget an awful, at peace,
—it also marks the time, which at England's trade.
the morning, and saves a description of Iberia's king
sun, and a great deal about gildin
misphere.

Dang. But, pray, are the sentinels se bigotry

Puff. Fast as watchmen. ile we,

Sneer. Isn't that odd though at such an a d.
crisis ?

Puff. To be sure it is,—but smaller thing ed arma
give way to a striking scene at the opening ; d,
a rule.—And the case is, that two great m

With purpose to invade these realms——

' *Sir C.* Is sailed,

Our last advices so report.

' *Sir W.* While the Iberian admiral's chief hope,
His darling son, by chance a pris'ner hath been
ta'en,

And in this fort of Tilbury——

' *Sir C.* ——Is now

C'onfin'd.

' *Sir W.* You also know——'

Dang. Mr. Puff, as he knows all this, why does
sir Walter go on telling him?

Puff. But the audience are not supposed to know
any thing of the matter, are they?

Sneer. True, but I think you manage ill: for there
certainly appears no reason why sir Walter should
be so communicative.

Puff. 'Egad now, that is one of the most ungrate-
ful observations I ever heard—for the less induce-
ment he has to tell all this, the more, I think, you
ought to be oblig'd to him; for I am sure you'd
know nothing of the matter without.

Dang. That's very true, upon my word.

Puff. But you will find he was not going on.

' *Sir C.* Enough, enough—'tis plain—and I no
more am in amazement lost!——'

Puff. Here, now you see, sir Christopher did not
in fact ask any one question for his own informa-
tion.

Sneer. No, indeed:—his has been a most disim-
terested curiosity!

Dang. Really, I find, we are very much oblig'd
to them both.

Puff. To be sure, you are. Now then for the
commander in chief, the earl of Leicester! who, you
know, was no favourite but of the queen's—We left
off—' in amazement lost!'

' *Sir C.* Am in amazement lost.

But, see where noble Leicester comes ! supreme
In honours and command.'

Sneer. But who are these with him ?

Puff. O ! very valiant knights ; one is the governor of the fort, the other the master of the horse.—
And now, I think, you shall hear some better language : I was obliged to be plain and intelligible in the first scene, because there was so much matter of fact in it ; but now I faith, you have trope, figure, and metaphor, as plenty as noun-substantives.

' *Enter Earl of Leicester, the Governor, and others.*

' *Leic.* How's this, my friend ! is't thus your new
fledg'd zeal

And plumed valour moulds in roosted sloth ?

Can the quick current of a patriot heart,
Thus stagnate in a cold and weedy converse,
Or freeze in tideless inactivity ?

No ! rather let the fountain of your valour
Spring through each stream of enterprise,
Each petty channel of conducive daring ;
Till the full torrent of your foaming wrath
O'erwhelm the flats of sunk hostility !

' *Sir C.* No more ! the fresh'ning breath of thy
rebuke

Hath fill'd the swelling canvas of our souls !

And thus, though fate should cut the cable of
Our topmost hopes, in friendship's closing } *take*
line } *hands*

We'll grapple with despair, and if we fall,
We'll fall in glory's wake !

' *Leic.* There spoke old England's genius !
Then, are we all resolved ?

' *All.* We are—all resolved !

' *Leic.* To conquer—or be free ?

' *All.* To conquer—or be free.

'Leic. All ?

'All All.'

Dang. Nem. con. 'egad !

Puff. O yes, where they do agree on the stage, their unanimity is wonderful !

'Leic. Then, let's embrace—and now——'

Sneer. What the plague, is he going to pray ?

Puff. Yes, hush !—in great emergencies, there is nothing like a prayer !

'Leic. O mighty Mars !—'

Puff. Stop, my dear sir, you don't expect to find Mars there. No, sir, whenever you address the gods, always look into the one shilling gallery.

'Leic. O mighty Mars !—'

Dang. Why should he pray to Mars ?

Puff. Hush !

'Leic. O mighty Mars ! if in thy homage bred,
Each point of discipline I've still observ'd,
Nor but by due promotion, and the right
Of service, to the rank of major-general
Have ris'n ; assist thy votary now.

Gov. Yet do not rise—hear me ?

Master of Horse. And me !

Knight. And me !

Sir W. And me !

Sir C. And me !

Puff. And me ! Now, mind your hits, pray all together.

'All. Behold thy votaries submissive beg,
That thou wilt deign to grant them all they ask,——'

Puff. Give 'em a longer all, next time.

'All. Assist them to accomplish all their ends,
And sanctify whatever means they use.
To gain them !'

Sneer. A very orthodox quintetto !

Puff. Vastly well, gentlemen.—Is that well ma-

naged or not? have you such a prayer as that on the stage?

Sneer. Not exactly.

Leic. (to Puff) But, sir, you haven't settled how we are to get off here.

Puff. You could not get off kneeling, could you?

Sir W. (to Puff) O no, sir! impossible!

Puff. It would have a good effect, i'faith, if you could exeunt praying!—Yes, and would vary the established mode of springing off with a glance at the pit. Just try.

Sneer. O never mind, so as you get them off, I'll answer for it the audience won't care how.

Puff. Well, then, repeat the last line standing, and go off the old way.

All. And sanctify whatever means we use to gain them. [exeunt.]

Dang. Bravo! a fine exit.

Sneer. Stay a moment.—(the Sentinels get up.

First Sent. All this shall to lord Burleigh's ear.

Second Sent. 'Tis meet it should.

[exeunt Sentinels.]

Dang. Hey, why¹ thought those fellows had been asleep?

Puff. Only a pretence, there's the art of it: they were spies of lord Burleigh's. Take care, my dear Dangle, the morning gun is going to fire.

Dang. Well, that will have a fine effect.

Puff. I think so, and helps to realize the scene.—(cannon three times) What the plague!—three morning guns!—there never is but one!—ay this is always the way at the theatre—give these fellows a good thing, and they never know when to have done with it. You have no more cannon to fire?

Prom. (from within) No, sir.

Puff. Now then, for soft music.

Sneer. Pray what's that for ?

Puff. It shows that Tilburina is coming ; nothing introduces you a heroine like soft music. Here she comes.

Dang. And her confidante, I suppose ?

Puff. To be sure : here they are—inconsolable. to the minuet in Ariadne ! *(soft music.)*

Enter Tilburina and Confidante.

Til. ' Now flowers unfold their beauties to the sun,
And, blushing, kiss the beam he sends to wake
them.

The strip'd carnation, and the guarded rose,
The vulgar wall-flow'r, and smart gilly-flower,
The polyanthus mean—the dapper daisy,
Sweet-william, and sweet marjorum,—and all
The tribe of single and of double pinks !

Now too, the feather'd warblers tune their notes
Around, and charm the listening grove—The lark !
The linnet ! chaffinch ! bullfinch ! goldfinch ! green-
finch !

—But, oh, to me, no joy can they afford !
Nor rose, nor wall-flow'r, nor smart gilly-flower,
Nor polyanthus mean, nor dapper daisy,
Nor William sweet, nor marjorum—nor lark,
Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove !

Puff. Your white hankerchief, madam—

Til. I thought, sir, I was'n't to use that till ' heart
rending wo.'

Puff. O yes, madam—at ' the finches of the
grove,' if you please.

Til. Nor lark,

Linnet, nor all the finches of the grove ! *(overps.)*

Puff. Vastly well, madam !

Dang. Vastly well, indeed !

Til. For, O too sure, heart rending wo is now
The lot of wretched Tilburina !

Dang. O!—'tis too much.

Sneer. Oh!—it is indeed.

'*Con.* Be comforted, sweet lady—for who knows,
But heav'n has yet some milk-white day in store.

'*Til.* Alas, my gentle Nora,
Thy tender youth, as yet, hath never mourn'd
Love's fatal dart.

'*Con.* But see where your stern father comes;
It is not meet that he should find you thus.'

Puff. Hey, what the plague! what a cut is here!
—why, what is become of the description of her
first meeting with Don Whiskerandos? his gallant
behaviour in the sea-fight, and the simile of the can-
nary bird?

Til! Indeed, sir, you'll find they will not be miss'd.

Puff. Very well.—Very well!

Til. The cue, ma'am, if you please.

'*Con.* It is not meet that he should find you thus.'

'*Til.* Thou counsel'st right, but 'tis no easy task
For barefac'd grief to wear a mask of joy.

Enter Governor.

'*Gor.* How's this—in tears?—O Tilburina, shame!
Is this a time for muddling tenderness.

And Cupid's baby woes?—hast thou not heard
That haughty Spain's pope-consecrated fleet
Advances to our shores, while England's fate,
Like a clipp'd guinea, trembles in the scale?

'*Til.* Then is the crisis of my fate at hand!
I see the fleet's approach,—I see—'

Puff. Now pray, gentlemen, mind.—This is one
of the most useful figures we tragedy writers have,
by which a hero or heroine, in consideration of their
being often obliged to overlook things that are on
the stage, is allowed to hear and see a number of
things that are not.

Sneer. Yes—a kind of poetical second-sight!

Puff. Yes—now then, madam.

‘*Til.* I see their decks

Are clear’d!—I see the signal made!

The line is form’d—a cable’s length asunder!

I see the frigate station’d in the rear;

And now I hear the thunder of the guns!

I hear the victor’s shouts—I also hear

The vanquish’d groans!—and now ’tis smoke—
and now

I see the loose sails shiver in the wind!

I see—I see—what soon you’ll see—

‘*Gov.* Hold, daughter! peace! this love hath
turn’d thy brain:

The Spanish fleet thou canst not see—because

—It is not yet in sight!’

Dang. ‘Egad though, the governor seems to make
no allowance for the poetical figure you talk of.

‘*Puff.* No, a plain matter-of-fact man—that’s his
character.

‘*Til.* But will you then refuse his offer?

‘*Gov.* I must—I will—I can—I ought—I do.

‘*Til.* His liberty is all he asks

Sneer. All who asks, Mr. Puff? Who is—

Puff. ‘Egad, sir, I can’t tell—Here has been
such cutting and slashing, I don’t know where they
have got to, myself.

Til. Indeed, sir, you will find it will connect very
well.

Puff. O,—if they hadn’t been so devilish free with
their cutting here, you would have found that Don
Whiskerands has been tampering for his liberty—
and, now, pray observe the consciousness with
which the argument is conducted. ‘Egad, the pro
and con goes as smart as hits in a fencing match.
It is indeed a sort of small-sword logic, which we
have borrowed from the French.

‘*Til.* A retreat in Spain’

' *Gov.* —Outlawry here!

' *Til.* Your daughter's prayer!

' *Gov.* —Your father's oath!

' *Til.* My lover!

' *Gov.* —My country!

' *Til.* Tilburina!

' *Gov.* England!

' *Til.* A title!

' *Gov.* —Honour!

' *Til.* A pension!

' *Gov.* —Conscience!

' *Til.* A thousand pounds!

' *Gov.* Hah! thou hast touched me nearly!

Puff. There you see—she threw in Tilburina.
~~Quarrel~~ parry carte with England!—Hah! thrust in
 tierce, a title! parried by honour.—Hah! a pension
 over the affront! put by, by conscience.—Then flank-
 made with a thousand pounds—and a palpable hit,
 'egad!

' *Til.* Canst thou—

Reject the suppliant, and the daughter too?

' *Gov.* No more; I would not hear thee plead in
 vain,

The father softens—but the governor
 Is fix'd!

[*exit.*

' *Til.* 'Tis well, —hence then, fond hopes,—
 fond passion, hence;

Duty, behold I am all over thine—

' *Whisk.* (*without*) Where is my love—my—

' *Til.* —Ha!

' *Whisk.* (*entering*) My beauteous enemy—
 My conquering Tilburina? How! is't thus
 We meet? why are thy looks averse! what means
 That falling tear—that frown of boding wo?
 Hah! now indeed I am a prisoner!
 Yes, now I feel the galling weight of these.

Disgraceful chains—which, cruel Tilburina !

Thy doating captive gloried in before.—

But thou art false, and Whiskerandos is undone !

‘ *Til.* O no ; how little dost thou know thy Tilburina !

‘ *Whisk.* Art thou then true ? Be gone, cares, doubts, and fears,

I make you all a present to the winds ;

And if the winds reject you—try the waves.’

Puff. The wind you know, is the established receiver of all stolen sighs, and cast-off griefs and apprehensions.

‘ *Til.* Yet must we part ?—stern duty steals our doom :

Though here I call yon conscious clouds to witness

Could I pursue the bias of my soul,

All friends, all right of parents, I’d disclaim

And thou, my Whiskerandos, should be father,

And mother, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt,

And friend, to me !

‘ *Whisk.* O matchless excellence !—and must we part ?

Well, if—we must—we must—and in that case
The less is said the better.’

Puff. Hey-day ! here’s a cut !—What, are all the mutual protestations out ?

Til. Now pray, sir, don’t interrupt us just here, you ruin our feelings.

Puff. Your feelings !—but zounds, my feelings, ma’am !

‘ *Whisk.* One last embrace.—

‘ *Til.* Now,—farewell for ever.

‘ *Whisk.* For ever.

‘ *Til.* Ay, for ever.

(going.

Puff. S’death and fury !—Gads-life ! Sir ! Ma-

dam, if you go out without the parting look, you might as well dance out—Here, here!

Con. But pray, sir, how am I to get off here?

Puff. You, pshaw! what the devil signifies how you get off! edge away at the top, or where you will—(*pushes the Confidante off*) Now ma'am you see—

Til. We understand you, sir,

'Ay, for ever.

'Both. Oh!—

[turning back and exeunt; scene closes.]

Dang. O charming!

Puff. Hey!—'tis pretty well, I believe—you see, I don't attempt to strike out any thing new—but I ~~take~~ I improve on the established modes. So, now for the under plot.

Sneer. What the plague, have you another plot?

Puff. O word, yes—ever while you live, have two plots to your tragedy.—The grand point in managing them, is only to let your under plot have as little connexion with your main plot as possible—Now, Mr. Hopkins, as soon as you please.

Enter under prompter.

Under Promp. Sir, the carpenter says it is impossible you can go to the park scene yet.

Puff. The park scene!—No I mean the description scene here, in the wood.

Under Prom. Sir, the performers have cut it out.

Puff. Cut it out!

Under Promp. Yes, sir.

Puff. What! the whole account of queen Elizabeth?

Under Prom. Yes, sir.

Puff. And the description of her horse and side-saddle?

Under Promp. Yes, sir.

Puff. So, so, this is very fine, indeed! Mr. Hopkins, how the plague could you suffer this?

Hop. (*from within*) Sir, indeed the pruning-knife—

Puff. The pruning-knife—zounds, the axe! why here has been such lopping and topping, I shan't have the bare trunk of my play left presently.—Very well, sir—the performers must do as they please; but, upon my soul, I'll print it every word.

Sneer. That I would, indeed.

Puff. So! this is a pretty dilemma, truly!—Gentlemen—you must excuse me, these fellows will never be ready, unless I go and look after them myself.

Sneer. O dear sir—these little things will happen—

Puff. To cut out this scene!—but I'll print it—'egad, I'll print it every word!

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I. BEFORE THE CURTAIN.

Enter Puff, Sneer, and Dang.

Puff. Well, we are ready—now then for the justices.

(*curtain rises; Justices, Constables, &c. discovered.*)

Sneer. This, I suppose, is a sort of senate scene?

Puff. Yes.—What, gentlemen, do you mean to go at once to the discovery scene?

Just. If you please, sir.

Puff. O very well—harkye, I don't choose to say any thing more, but i'faith, they have mangled my play in the most shocking manner!

Dang. It's a great pity!

Puff. Now then, Mr. Justice, if you please.

Just. Are all the volunteers without?

Const. They are,
Some ten in fetters, and some twenty drunk

' *Just.* Attends the youth, whose most opprobrious
And clear convicted crimes have stamp't him sol-
dier ?

' *Const.* He waits your pleasure, eager to repay
The blest reprieve that sends him to the fields
Of glory, there to raise his brauded hand
In honour's cause.

' *Just.* 'Tis well——
If 'tis your worship's pleasure, bid him enter.

' *Const.* I fly, the herald of your will. [*exit Const.*]

Puff. Quick, sir !

Sneer. But, Mr. Puff, I think not only the justice,
but the clown, seems to talk in as high a style as
the first hero among them.

Puff. Heaven forbid they should not, in a free
country.——Sir, I am not for making slavish distinc-
tions, and giving all the fine language to the upper
sort of people.

Dang. That's very noble in you, indeed.

' *Enter Justice's Lady.*

' *Lady.* Forgive this interruption, good my love,
But, as I just now past, a pris'ner youth
Whom rude hands hither lead, strange bodings
seiz'd

My fluttering heart, and to myself I said,
And if our Tom had liv'd, he'd surely been
This stripling's height !

' *Just.* Ha ! sure some powerful sympathy directs
Us both——

' *Enter Son and Constable.*

' What is thy name ?

' *Son.* My name's Tom Jenkins——alias, have I none
Though orphan'd, and without a friend !

' *Just.* Thy parents ?

' *Son.* My father dwelt in Rochester——and was
As I have heard——a fishmonger——no more.'

Puff. What, sir, do you leave out the account of your birth, parentage, and education?

‘*Son.* They have settled it so, sir, here

Puff. Oh! oh!

‘*Lady.* Had he no other name?

‘*Son.* I’ve seen a bill

Of his, sign’d Tomkins, creditor.

‘*Just.* This does indeed confirm each circumstance

The gipsy told!—Prepare!

‘*Son.* I do.

‘*Just.* No orphan, nor without a friend, art thou—
I am thy father, here’s thy mother, there
Thy uncle—this thy first cousin, and those
Are all your near relations!

‘*Mother.* O ecstasy of bliss!

‘*Son.* O most unlook’d for happiness!
(*they faint alternately in each other’s arms.*)

‘*Puff.* There, you see relationship, like murder,
will out.

‘*Just.* Now, let’s revive—else were this joy too
much!

But come—and we’ll unfold the rest within,
And thou, my boy, must needs want rest and food.
Hence may each orphan hope, as chance directs,
To find a father—where he least expects! [*exeunt.*]

Puff. What do you think of that?

Dang. One of the finest discovery scenes I ever
saw.—Why, this under plot would have made a tra-
gedy itself.

Sneer. Ay, or a comedy either.

‘*Puff.* And keeps quite clear, you see of the other.

• *Enter scenerman, taking away the seats.*

Puff. The scene remains, does it?

Scenem. Yes, sir.

Puff. You are to leave one chair, you know.—

But it is always awkward in a tragedy, to have you fellows coming in, in your playhouse liveries, to remove things—I wish that could be managed better.

Enter a Beefeater.

Beef. Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee.

Sneer. Haven't I heard that line before ?

Puff. No, I fancy not—Where, pray ?

Dang. Yes, I think there is something like it in Othello.

Puff. 'Gad ? now you put me in mind on't, I believe there is—but that's of no consequence—all that can be said is, that two people happened to hit on the same thought—and Shakspeare made use of it first, that's all.

Sneer. Very true.

Puff. Now, sir, your soliloquy—but speak more to the pit, if you please—the soliloquy always to the pit—that's a rule.

Beef. Though hopeless love finds comfort in despair,

It never can endure a rival's bliss !

But soft—I am observ'd. *[exit Beefeater.]*

Dang. That's a very short soliloquy.

Puff. Yes—but it would have been a great deal longer, if he had not been observ'd.

Sneer. A most sentimental beefeater that, Mr. Puff.

Puff. Harkye—I would not have you be too sure he is a beefeater.

Sneer. What, a hero in disguise ?

Puff. No matter—I only give you a hint—But now for my principal character—Here he comes lord Burleigh in person ! Pray, gentlemen, step this way—softly—if he is but perfect !

Enter Burleigh, goes slowly to the chair, and sits.

Sneer. Mr. Puff!

Puff. Hush! vastly well, sir! vastly well! a most interesting gravity!

Dang. What, isn't he to speak at all?

Puff. 'Egad, I thought you'd ask me that—yes, it is a very likely thing—that a minister in his situation, with the whole affairs of the nation on his head, should have time to talk!—but, hush! or you'll put him out.

Sneer. Put him out! how the plague can that be, if he's not going to say any thing?

Puff. There's a reason! why his part is to think, and how the plague do you imagine he can think if you keep talking?

Dang. That's very true, upon my word."

[Burleigh comes forward, shakes his head and exit.]

Sneer. He is very perfect, indeed—Now, pray what did he mean by that?

Puff. You don't take it?

Sneer. No; I don't upon my soul.

Puff. Why, by that shake of the head, he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause, and wisdom in their measures—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people—the country would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer. The devil!—did he mean all that by shaking his head?

Puff. Every word of it—If he shook his head, as I taught him.

Sneer. O, here are some of our old acquaintance.

Enter Halton and Raleigh.

Sir C. My niece, and your niece too?

By heav'n there's witchcraft in't—He could not else

Have gain'd their hearts. But see where they approach ;

Some horrid purpose low'ring on their brows !

' *Sir W.* Let us withdraw and mark them.

(withdraw.)

Sneer. What is all this ?

Puff. Ah ! here has been more pruning !—but the fact is, these two young ladies are also in love with Don Whiskerandos.—Now, gentlemen, this scene goes entirely for what we call situation and stage effect, by which the greatest applause may be obtained, without the assistance of language, sentiment, or character : pray mark !

' *Enter the two Nieces.*

— ' 1. *Niece.* Ellena here !

But see the proud destroyer of my peace.

Revenge is all the good I've left. *(aside.)*

' 2. *Niece.* He comes, the false disturber of my quiet.

Now, vengeance, do thy worst—— *(aside.)*

Enter Whiskerandos.

' *Whisk.* O hateful liberty——if thus in vain I seek my Tilburina !

' *Both Nieces.* And ever shalt !

' *(Sir C. and Sir W. come forward)* Hold ! we will avenge you.

' *Whisk.* Hold you——or see your nieces bleed —

' *(the two Nieces draw their two daggers to strike Whiskerandos, the two Uncles at the instant, with their two swords drawn, catch their two Nieces' arms, and turn the points of their swords to Whiskerandos, who immediately draws two daggers, and holds them to the two Nieces' bosoms.)*

Puff. There's situation for you ! there's an heroic group !—You see the ladies can't stab Whiskeran-

dos—he durst not strike them for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him because of their nieces—I have them all at the dead lock!—for every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then they must stand there for ever.

Puff. So they would, if I had'n't a very fine contrivance for't—Now mind——

Enter Beefeater, with his halberd.

Beef. In the queen's name, I charge you all to drop

Your swords and daggers!

(they drop their swords and daggers.)

Sneer. That is a contrivance indeed.

Puff. Ay—in the queen's name.

Sir C. Come, niece!

Sir W. Come niece! *[exunt with the two Nieces.]*

Whisk. What's he, who bids us thus renounce our guard?

Beef. Thou must do more—renounce thy love!

Whisk. Thou liest—base beefeater!

Beef. Ha! Hell! the lie!

By heav'n thou'st rous'd the lion in my heart!

Off, your mean habit!—base disguise! off! off!

(discovers himself, by throwing off his upper dress, and appearing in a very fine waistcoat.)

Am I a beefeater now?

Or beams my crest as terrible, as when

In Biscay's Bay I took thy captive sloop!

Puff. There, egad! he comes out to be the very captain of the privateer who had taken Whiskers' prisoner—and was himself an old lover of Tilburina's.

Dang. Admirably manag'd, indeed.

Puff. Now, stand out of the way.

Whisk. I thank thee, fortune! that hast thus bestow'd

A weapon to chastise this insolent.

(takes up one of the swords.

' *Beef.* I take thy challenge, Spaniard, and I thank

Thee, fortune, too!— *(takes up the other sword.*

' *Whisk.* Vengeance and Tilburina!

' *Beef.* Exactly so——

(they fight, and after the usual number of wounds given, Whiskerandos falls.

' *Whisk.* O cursed party!—that last thrust in tierce

Was fatal!—Captain, thou has fenced well!

And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

For all eter——

' *Beef.*——nity—he would have added, but stern death

Cut short his being, and the noun, at once!

Puff. O my dear sir, you are too slow; now mind me.—Sir, shall I trouble you to die again?

' *Whisk.* And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene

For all eter——

' *Beef.*——nity—he would have added——'

Puff. No, sir—that's not it—once more, if you please.

' *Whisk.* I wish, sir—you would practise this without me—I can't stay dying here all night

Puff. Very well, we'll go over it by-and-bye—I must humour these gentlemen! *[exit Whiskerandos.*

' *Beef.* Farewell—brave Spaniard, and when next——'

Puff. Dear sir, you needn't speak that speech, as the body has walked off.

' *Beef.* That's true, sir,—then I'll join the fleet.

Puff. If you please. *[exit Beefeater]* Now, enter Tilburina, stark mad, in white satin.

Sneer. Why in white satin?

Puff. O Lord, sir—when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin—don't she, Dangle?

Dang. Always—it's a rule

Puff. Yes—here it is—(*looking at the book*) enter, 'Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidante stark mad in white linen.

Enter Tilburina and Confidante mad, according to custom.

Sneer. But what the deuce, is the confidante to be mad too?

Puff. To be sure, she is: the confidante is always to do whatever her mistress does, weep when she weeps, smile when she smiles, go mad when she goes mad.—Now, madam confidante—but keep your madness in the back ground, if you please.

'Til The wind whistles—the moon rises—see
They have kill'd my squirrel in his cage!

Is this a grasshopper?—Ha! no, it is my
Whiskerandos—you shall not keep him—

I know you have him in your pocket—

An oyster may be cross'd in love—Who says

A whale's a bird!—Ha! did you call, my love?

—He's here! He's there!—He's every where!

Ah me! He's no where! [*exit Tilburina.*]

Puff. There, do you ever desire to see any body madder than that?

Sneer. Never, while I live! And pray what becomes of her?

Puff. She is gone to throw herself into the sea, to be sure—and that brings us at once to the scene of action; and so to my catastrophe—my sea-fight, I mean.

Sneer. What, you bring that in at last?

Puff. Yes—yes—you know my play is called 'the Spanish Armada, otherwise, 'egad, I have no occa-

sion for the battle at all.—Now then for my magnificence,—my battle!—my noise!—and my procession!—You are all ready?

Prom. (*within*) Yes, sir.

Puff. Is the Thames drest?

Enter Thames, with two Attendants.

Thames Here I am, sir.

Puff. Very well, indeed—See, gentlemen, there's a river for you!

Sneer. But, pray, who are these gentlemen in green with him?

Puff. Those?—those are his banks.

Sneer. His banks?

Puff. Yes, one crowned with alders, and the other with a villa!—you take the allusions? but, hey! what the plague! you have got both your banks on one side—Here, sir, come round—Ever while you live, Thames, go between your banks. (*bell rings*)—There, soh! now for't!—Stand aside, my dear friends!—away, Thames!

[*exit Thames, between his banks.*

(*flourish of drums, trumpets, cannon, &c. &c.—scene changes to the sea—the fleets engage—the music plays “Britons, Strike Home”—Spanish fleet destroyed by fire-ships, &c.—English fleet advances—music plays, “Rule Britannia.”—The procession of all the English rivers and their tributaries, with their emblems, &c. begins with Handel's water music, ends with a chorus, to the march in Judas Maccabæus.—During this scene, Puff directs and applauds every thing—then*

Puff. Well, pretty well—but not quite perfect—so ladies and gentlemen, if you please, we'll rehearse this piece again to-morrow. (*curtain drops*

HONEST THIEVES.

A Farce,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY T. KNIGHT.

CORRECTLY GIVEN,
AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL.
With Remarks.



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REMARKS.



THIS farce is an alteration from the "*Comaillie*," a comedy by Sir Robert Howard : the present piece is divested of the peculiar satire directed, in the comedy, against the fanaticism of the time of Charles I.

The alterations here made by Mr. Thomas Knight, a performer of considerable eminence, and formerly of Covent Garden Theatre, have been always received with approbation. *Teague* is a happy composition of fidelity, and of those blunders exclusively appropriated, by English custom, to our Irish brethern. The other characters, though coarsely drawn, stimulate us agreeably by their absurdities

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	Covent Garden
Colonel Careless	Mr. <i>Brundon</i> .
Captain Manly	Mr. <i>Claremont</i> .
Mr. Story	Mr. <i>Williams</i> .
Justice Day	Mr. <i>Davenport</i> .
Abel	Mr. <i>Simmons</i> .
Obadiah	Mr. <i>Munden</i> .
Bailiffs	{ Messrs. <i>Thompson &</i> <i>Wyld</i> .
Servant to Justice Day	Mr. <i>Curteis</i> .
Coachman	Mr. <i>Abbot</i> .
Teague	Mr. <i>Johnstone</i> .
Ruth	Mrs. <i>Litchfield</i> .
Arabella	Miss <i>Sims</i> .
Mrs. Day	Mrs. <i>Davenport</i> .

SCENE—Gloucester.

HONEST THIEVES.



ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. AN INN DOOR.

Mrs. D. (without) LET the porter carry our bundles down to Mr. Day's house.

Enter Mrs. Day, Arabella, Ruth, Captain Manly, and Coachman.

Mrs. D. Out upon't, how dusty 'tis!—'tis a sad thing for people of the better sort, who are us'd to travel in a different style, to put up with a filthy stage coach. I believe our places are paid for, coachman, are they not?

Coach. Yes, ma'am—paid for at Oxford.

Mrs. D. Very well—Something for you to drink.

Coach. Thank you, ma'am. [Exit.

Mrs. D. Why, how now, Arabella! what, sad! by my faith you need not—say I told not you so. My son Abel has been pining the whole month that you have been absent; he's much improved of late; grown quite genteel, I assure you.

Arab. Then he is improved indeed! (aside.

Mrs. D. Now we talk of Abel, I wonder he, or my husband's chief clerk, Obadiah, is not here ready to attend me. (seeing Manly) How is it with you, sir? weary of your journey, I suppose?

Man. Her tongue will never tire. (aside) Yes, ma'am, so many in the coach has rather heated me.

Enter Obadiah and Abel

Mrs. D. Oh! are you come? didn't you think it

fit that I should find attendance ready for me when I a'lighted?

Obad. I ask your honour's pardon. I do profess I should have attended sooner, but that his young honour, Mr. Abel, delayed me.

Mrs D. Well, son Abel, you must be obeyed.—What, you are rejoiced at the return of one I have in my eye, ha?

Abel Yes, I have, by my father's desire, been thinking more about some body than I'll speak of.

Mrs D. That's right. You must now endeavour to please the ladies, cast off Obadiah's formalities, show 'em your breeding, boy, and let 'em see you are as well taught as ted. *(aside.*

Abel If you please I would speak a word in private

Arab (to Ruth): That poor gentleman seems heartily tired of Mrs. Day's tongue.

Ruth Indeed he looks fatigued.

Arab I like him much; he seems plain and honest.

Ruth. Plain enough in all conscience; but to please you, I'll speak to him.

Arab. No, pr'ythee, don't—he'll think us rude.

Ruth Then I shall think him an ass.—I hope you are better after your journey, sir?

Man. No, madam, I am rather worse.

Ruth. You don't like riding in a stage, perhaps?

Man, No, ma'am, nor talking after it. This young spawn is as bad as the old pike. *(aside.*

Ruth. Short, however, if not sweet. ●

Arab Pr'ythee, peace!—sir, we wish you all happiness.

Man. Ma'am, I thank you.—I like her well; but I hope she'll say no more, lest she should spoil my good opinion *(aside*

Mrs. D. (*advancing*) Come, Arabella—'tis as I told you;—Abel has it—Say no more. Take her by the hand, Abel—faith she may venture to take you for better for worse, lead her along.—Fare you well, sir; (*to Manly*) Oh! Abel's a notable fellow!

(*Abel leads off Arabella, and Obadiah, Mrs. Day, leering at Ruth, who follows*)

Man. There's something very interesting about that gul—Well, here I am in the ancient city of Gloucester, quartered for at least six months, if my creditors don't hunt me out of it. As our troop came some days since, private lodgings, I suppose, are scared. (*going.*)

Enter Colonel Careless and Story.

Care. Dear Manly, welcome to Gloucester.

Man. Dear Colonel, I did not think to have met you so suddenly—Ah! my old friend, Lieutenant Story, your servant

Story. Your friend still, Captain—but no longer a lieutenant: I have quitted the service some time; I am married and settled here, and, faith, as times go, well to do.

Man. I am glad of it.

Care. I hope, Manly, our creditors were not troublesome at our last quarters after I left you? (*aside.*)

Man. They threatened us with the law: but I dare say a few pounds will quiet 'em for a month or so.

Care. And in that time we may get relief, by death or marriage. When did you arrive?

Man. Just now—came in a stage coach, wedged in with half a dozen; a justice's wife, full of vulgar dignity, and her daughter; another young lady with 'em, rather handsome; who, it seems, is intended for the justice's eldest son, a downright ass. He came here to meet his mother, and with him his father's

drawling clerk.—two such formal, awkward rascals you never saw—ha! ha!

Story. The handsome lady you speak of is a rich heiress; they say, her father died abroad in the king's service, and left this Mr Day her guardian, who, it seems, designs her for this his first-born booby.

Care. Why what a dull dog wert thou, Murly, not to make love and rescue her!—hey! whom have we here?

Enter Teague, wrapt in a blanket.

Who art thou, pray?

Tea. A poor Irishman, heaven save me, and save all your three faces!—give me a thutteen.

Care. Thou wilt not lose any thing for want of asking.

Tea. Faith, I can't afford it.

Care. Well, there's sixpence for thy confidence.

Tea. By my troth, 'tis too little; make it thirteen and I'll drink all your healths.

Man. How long hast thou been in England?

Tea. Ever since I came here, and longer too.

Care. What's thy business?

Tea. I have no business at all, at all; I'm a gentleman at large, and that's all I have done since I left my master.

Care. Why did'st leave him?

Tea. Because he died one day.

Care. Then it seems he left thee.

Tea. Yes, indeed—he left poor Teague—but he never served me so before in all his life.

Care. Pr'ythee, who was thy master?

Tea. Sure he was the good Colonel Danger.

(with affection.)

Care. Colonel Danger! he was my dear and noble friend

Tea. Yes, that he was, and poor Teague's too.

Care. Where did he die?

Tea. He died in bed, in the enemy's prison, t'other side the water there.

Cart. And what dost thou mean to do?

Tea. I would get a good master, if a good master would get me. I can't tell what to do else—I was here on my way to Bristol, to see to beg a passage to old Ireland: I went to the man who lives at that house, at the end of t'other house, beside the great house, who tells by the stars and the *planters* what good luck is for man; and he told me there was no star for a poor Irishman. By my soul, says I, there are as many stars in Ireland as England, and more too. Now I'll go to Ireland, and if the stars be there still, I'll come back, and I'll beat his big pate, if he won't give Teague some good luck.

• *Care.* Poor fellow, I pity him; he seems simple and honest. Well, Teague, what wouldst thou say, if I should take thee?

Tea. I'd say you could not do a better thing, though you got a worse man.

Care. Thy master was my dear friend;—wert thou with him when he died?

Tea. Upon my soul and I was: and I howled over him after—and I asked him why he would die and leave poor Teague; but the devil a word he answered; and in faith I staid kissing his sweet face, till they took him from me. While my master was ill, we sold our clothes to buy physie and other things to comfort his stomach; but och! he paid me again, for when he died, he left me all that he had in the world.

Care. Did he leave thee all that he had?

Tea. Faith and he did: he left me his love and his friendship, and that was his *all*; and then I wrapt

myself up in this blanket, in which many's the time I rolled him to keep him warm ; and it does not fit me the worse for that ; and in this dress I turned out for my journey, without any victuals at all besides a little snuff.

Care. Well, well, serve and love me, as thou didst thy master, and thou shalt live with me.

Tea. Faith and I will.—Och ! be such another master to poor Teague, and sure I'd serve you to the world's end, whether I would or no. (*to himself*) I'm hired !

Care. Now then to business—we must visit these ladies you speak of, Manly :—Story, do you know the family ?

Story. I know them by name : but Day would as soon let the devil loose with his family as a soldier :—but come to my house, where, if you please, you may both lodge.

Tea. I'm hired ! (*to himself.*)

Care. Courage, noble captain ! who knows but we may make our fortunes here in our new quarters, as well as Story !

Man. And should we not, 'tis but living on Teague's cheap diet of snuff.

Tea. And of that you shall have your belly full.

Care. Come, Teague, thou shalt lay by this mantle (in lavender if thou wilt) and mount the family livery ; and should our fathers, Manly, still keep us from inheritance, and matrimony prove unpropitious, we'll hoist sail for a new world. (*with rapture.*)

Tea. Ay, for ~~old~~ Ireland, master !—och ! upon my soul, and I'd like to take you to my little estate there in Tipperary.

Care. Hast thou got an estate there ?

Tea. Indeed and I have ; but the land is of such

REMARKS.



This piece was first launched at the Theatre in Goodman's Fields; but Mr. Garrick, who soon quitted that place for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, brought his farce with him. It appears to be founded on an old English Comedy; but has spirit, incident, and variety, with language well adapted to the characters.

Considerable success attended the numerous early representations of this diverting after-piece, and it forms a useful addition to the stock-list of every Theatre in the kingdom.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As originally acted at Drury Lane.

Sharp Mr. Garrick.

Gayless Mr. Blakes.

Justice Guttle Mr. Taswell.

Beau Trippet Mr. Neal.

Dick Mr. Yates.

Melissa Miss Rennet.

Kitty Pry Mrs. ^{at nvi}

Mrs. Gadabout Mrs. Cross.

Mrs. Trippet Mrs. Ridout.

THE LYING VALET.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I. GAYLESS'S LODGINGS.

Enter Gayless and Sharp.

Sharp. How, sir, shall you be married to-morrow? Eh, I'm afraid you joke with your poor humble servant.

• *Gay.* I tell thee, Sharp, last night Melissa consented, and fixed to-morrow for the happy day.

Sharp. 'Tis well she did, sir, or it might have been a dreadful one for us, in our present condition: all your money spent, your moveables sold, your honour almost ruined, and your humble servant almost starved; we could not possibly have stood it two days longer. But if this young lady will marry you, and relieve us, o'my conscience, I'll turn friend to the sex, and think of a wife myself.

Gay. And yet, Sharp, when I think how I have imposed upon her, I am almost resolved to throw myself at her feet, tell her the real situation of my affairs, ask her pardon, and implore her pity.

• *Sharp.* After marriage, with all my heart, sir.

Gay. What, because I am poor, shall I abandon my honour?

• *Sharp.* Yes, you must, sir, or abandon me: so pray discharge one of us; for eat I must, and sleep

dily too : and you know very well that that honour of yours will neither introduce you to a great man's table, nor get me credit for a single beef-steak.

Gay. What can I do ?

Sharp. Nothing, while honour sticks in your throat do gulp, master, and down with it.

Gay. Pr'ythee, leave me to my thoughts.

Sharp. Leave you ! No, not in such bad company, I'll assure you. Why you must certainly be a very great philosopher, sir, to moralize and declaim so charmingly as you do, about honour and conscience, when your doors are beset with bailiffs, and not one single guinea in your pocket to bribe the villains.

Gay. Don't be witty, and give your advice, sirrah !

Sharp. Do you be wise, and take it, sir. But to be serious ; you certainly have spent your fortune, and out-lived your credit, as your pockets and my belly can testify : your father has disowned you ; all your friends forsook you, except myself, who am starving with you. Now, sir, if you marry this young lady, who as yet, thank heaven, knows nothing of your misfortunes, and by that means procure a better fortune than that you squandered away, make a good husband, and turn economist, you still may be happy, may still be Sir William's heir, and the lady too no looser by the bargain. There's reason and argument, sir.

Gay. 'Twas with that prospect I first made love to her.

Sharp. Pray then make no more objections to the marriage. You see I am reduced to my waistcoat already ; and when necessity has undressed me from top to toe, she must begin with you ; and then we shall be forced to keep house, and die by inches —

Look you, sir, if you won't resolve to take my advice, while you have one coat to your back, I must ^{er} take to my heels while I have strength to run, and something to cover me : so, sir, wishing you much comfort and consolation with your bare conscience, I am your most obedient and half-starved friend and servant. *(going.)*

• *Gay.* Hold, Sharp, you won't leave me ?

Sharp. I must eat, sir ; by my honour and appetite, I must !

• *Gay.* Well then, I am resolved to favour the cheat ; and as I shall quite change my former course of life, happy may be the consequences : at least, of this I am sure—

Sharp. That you can't be worse than you are at present. *(a knocking without.)*

Gay. Who's there ?

• *Sharp.* Some of your former good friends, who favoured you with money at fifty per cent, and helped you to spend it ; and are now become daily mementoes to you of the folly of trusting rogues, and laughing at my advice.

Gay. Cease your impertinence !—to the door !—If they are duns, tell 'em my marriage is now certainly fixed, and persuade 'em still to forbear a few days longer. And do you hear, Sharp, if it should be any body from Melissa, say I am not at home, lest the bad appearance we make here should make 'em suspect something to our disadvantage.

• *Sharp.* I'll obey you, sir ; but I'm afraid they will easily discover the consumptive situation of our affairs by my chop-fallen countenance. • *[exit.]*

Gay. These very rascals, who are now continually dunning and persecuting me, were the very persons who led me to my ruin, partook of my prosperity, and professed the greatest friendship.

Sharp. (without) Upon my word, Mrs. Kitty, my master's not at home

Kitty. (without) Lookye, Sharp, I must and will see him.

Gay. Ha, what do I hear? Melissa's maid!—She's coming up stairs. What must I do?—I'll get into this closet and listen. [exit]

Re-enter Sharp, with Kitty.

Kitty. I must know where he is, and will know too, Mr. Impertinence!

Sharp. Not of me you won't *(aside)* He's not within, I tell you, Mrs. Kitty. I don't know myself. Do you think I can conjure?

Kitty. But I know you will lie abominably; therefore don't trifle with me. I come from my mistress, Melissa: you know, I suppose, what's to be done to-morrow morning?

Sharp. Ay, and to-morrow night too, girl!

Kitty. Not if I can help it. *(aside)* But come, where is your master? for see him I must.

Sharp. Pray, Mrs. Kitty, what's your opinion of this match between my master and your mistress?

Kitty. Why, I have no opinion of it at all; and yet most of our wants will be relieved by it too: for instance now, your master will get a fortune, that's what I'm afraid he wants; my mistress will get a husband, that's what she has wanted for some time; you will have the pleasure of my conversation, and I an opportunity of breaking your head for your impertinence.

Sharp. Madam, I am your most humble servant. But I'll tell you what, Mrs. Kitty, I am positively against the match; for, was I a man of my master's fortune—

Kitty. You'd marry, if you could, and mend it; ha, ha, ha!—Pray, Sharp, where does your master's estate lie?

LYING VALET.

Sharp. Lie, lie! why, it lies—'faith, I can't name any particular place, it lies in so many: his effects are divided, some here, some there; his steward hardly knows himself.

Kitty. Scattered, scattered I suppose. But hark-ye, Sharp, what's become of your furniture? You seem to be a little bare here at present.

Sharp. Why, you must know, as soon as the wedding was fixed, my master ordered me to remove his goods into a friend's house, to make room for a ball which he designs to give here the day after the marriage.

Kitty. The luckiest thing in the world! for my mistress designs to have a ball and entertainment here to-night before the marriage; and that's my business with your master.

Sharp. The devil it is! *(aside.)*

Kitty. She'll not have it public; she designs to invite only eight or ten couple of friends.

Sharp. No more?

Kitty. No more: and she ordered me to desire your master not make a great entertainment.

Sharp. Oh, never fear.

Kitty. Ten or a dozen little nice things, with some fruit, I believe, will be enough in all conscience.

Sharp. Oh, curse your conscience! *(aside.)*

Kitty. And what do you think I have done of my own head?

Sharp. What?

Kitty. I have invited all my lord Stately's servant's to come and see you, and have a dance in the kitchen: won't your master be surprised?

Sharp. Much so indeed!

Kitty. Well, be quick and find out your master, and make what haste you can with your preparations: you have no time to lose. Pr'ythee, Sharp,

what's the matter with you? I have not seen you for some time, and you seem to look a little thin.

Sharp. Oh, my unfortunate face! (*aside*) I'm in pure good health, thank you, Mrs. Kitty; and I'll assure you I have a very good stomach, never better in all my life; and I am full of vigour, hussy! (*offers to kiss her.*)

Kitty. What, with that face?—Well, by, by. (*going*)—Oh, Sharp, what ill-looking fellows are those, were standing about your door when I came in? They want your master, too, I suppose?

Sharp. Hum! Yes, they are waiting for him. They are some of his tenants out of the country, that want to pay him some money.

Kitty. Tenants! What, do you let his tenants stand in the street?

Sharp. They chose it; as they seldom come to town, they are willing to see as much of it as they can when they do: they are raw, ignorant, honest people.

Kitty. Well, I must run home—farewell!—But do you hear? Get something substantial for us in the kitchen: a ham, a turkey, or what you will. We'll be very merry. And be sure to remove the tables and chairs away there too, that we may have room to dance. I can't bear to be confined in my French dances—tal, lal, lal. (*dances*) Well, adieu! Without any compliment, I shall die, if I don't see you soon.

[*exit.*]

Sharp. And, without any compliment, I pray heaven you may!

Re-enter Gayless; they look for some time sorrowfully at each other.

Gay. Oh, Sharp!

Sharp. Oh, master!

Gay. We are certainly undone!

Sharp. That's no news to me.

Gay. Eight or ten couple of dancers—ten or a dozen little nice dishes, with some fruit—my lord Stately's servants—ham and turkey !

Sharp. Say no more ; the very sound creates an appetite : and I am sure, of late, I have had no occasion for whetters and provocatives.

Gay. Cursed misfortune ! what can we do ?

Sharp. Hang ourselves ; I see no other remedy ; except you have a receipt to give a ball and a supper, without meat or music.

Gay. Melissa has certainly heard of my bad circumstances, and has invented this scheme to distress me, and break off this match.

Sharp. I don't believe it, sir ; begging your pardon.

Gay. No ! why did her maid then make so strict an inquiry into my fortune and affairs ?

Sharp. For two very substantial reasons ; the first, to satisfy a curiosity natural to her as a woman ; the second, to have the pleasure of my conversation, very natural to her as a woman of taste and understanding.

Gay. Pr'ythee be more serious : is not our all at stake ?

Sharp. Yes, sir ; and yet that all of ours is of so little consequence, that a man, with a very small share of philosophy, may part from it without much pain or uneasiness. However, sir, I'll convince you, in half an hour, that Mrs. Melissa knows nothing of your circumstances. And I'll tell you what too, sir, she shan't be here to-night, and yet you shall marry her to-morrow morning.

Gay. How, how, dear Sharp ?

Sharp. 'Tis here, here, sir ! warm, warm ; and delays will cool it ; therefore I'll away to her, and

do you be as merry as love and poverty will permit you.

Would you succeed a faithful friend depute,
Whose head can plan, and front can execute.

[*exunt*]

SCENE II MELISSA'S LODGINGS

Enter Melissa and Kitty

Mel. You surprise me, Kitty ! the master not at home, the man in confusion, no furniture in the house and ill-looking fellows about the doors ! 'Tis all a riddle.

Kitty. But very easy to be explained.

Mel. Pr'ythee explain it then, nor keep me longer in suspense.

Kitty. The affair is this, madam : Mr. Gayless is over head and ears in debt ; you are over head and ears in love : you'll marry him to-morrow ; the next day your whole fortune goes to his creditors, and you and your children are to live comfortably upon the remainder

Mel. I cannot think him base.

Kitty. But I know they are all base. You are very young, and very ignorant of the sex ; I am young too, but have more experience : you never was in love before ; I have been in love with an hundred, and tried 'em all ; and know 'em to be a parcel of barbarous, perjured, deluding, bewitching devils.

Mel. The low wretches you have had to do with may answer the character you give 'em ; but Mr. Gayless—

Kitty. Is a man, madam.

Mel. I hope so Kitty, or I would have nothing to do with him.

Kitty. With all my heart. I have given you my

sentiments upon the occasion, and shall leave you to your own inclinations.

Mel. Oh, madam, I am much obliged to you for your great condescension; ha, ha, ha! However, I have so great a regard for your opinion, that had I certain proofs of his villany—

Kitty. Of his poverty you may have a hundred; I am sure I have had none to the contrary.

Mel. Oh, there the shot punches. (*aside.*

Kitty. Nay, so far from giving me the usual perquisites of my place, he has not so much as kept me in temper with little endearing civilities; and one might reasonably expect, when a man is deficient in one way, that he should make it up in another.

(*a knocking.*

Mel. See who's at the door. [*exit Kitty*] I must be cautious how I hearken too much to this girl—her bad opinion of Mr. Gayless seems to arise from his disregard of her.

Re-enter Kitty and Sharp.

So, Sharp, have you found your master? will things be ready for the ball and entertainment?

Sharp. To your wishes, madam—I have just now bespoke the music and supper, and wait now for your ladyship's further commands.

Mel. My compliments to your master, and let him know I and my company will be with him by six; we design to drink tea, and play at cards before we dance.

Kitty. So shall I and my company, Mr. Sharp. (*aside.*

Sharp. Mighty well, Madam! (*aside.*

Mel. Pr'ythee, Sharp, what makes you come without your coat? 'Tis too cool to go so airy, sure.

Kitty. Mr. Sharp, madam, is of a very hot constitution; ha, ha, ha!

Sharp. If it had been ever so cool, I have had enough to warm me since I came from home, I'm sure; but no matter for that. (*sighs*

Mel. What d'ye mean?

Sharp. Pray don't ask me, madam; I beseech you don't; let me change the subject.

Kitty. Insist upon knowing it madam.—My curiosity must be satisfied, or I shall burst. *(aside.)*

Mel. I do insist upon knowing: on pain of my displeasure, tell me!

Sharp. If my master should know—I must not tell you, madam. indeed.

Mel. I promise you, upon my honour, he never shall.

Sharp. But can your ladyship insure secrecy from that quarter?

Kitty. Yes, Mr. Jackanapes, for any thing you can say.

Mel. I engage for her.

Sharp. Why then, in short, madam—I cannot tell you.

Mel. Don't trifle with me.

Sharp. Then since you will have it, madam, I lost my coat in defence of your reputation.

Mel. In defence of my reputation?

Sharp. I will assure you, madam, I've suffered very much in defence of it; which is more than I would have done for my own.

Mel. Pr'ythee, explain.

Sharp. In short, madam, you was seen, about a month ago, to make a visit to my master alone.

Mel. Alone! my servant was with me.

Sharp. What, Mrs. Kitty? So much the worse; for she was looked upon as my property; and I was brought in guilty, as well as you and my master.

Kitty. What, your property, jackanapes?

Mel. What is all this?

Sharp. Why, madam, as I came out ^{at} it now to make preparation for you and your company to night, Mrs Pryabout, the attorney's wife at next door, calls

to me ; " Harkye, fellow !" says she, " do you and your modest master know that my husband shall indict your house, at the next parish meeting, for a nuisance ?"

Mel. A nuisance ?

Sharp. I said so—" A nuisance ! I believe none in the neighbourhood live with more decency and regularity than I and my master," as is really the case.— " Decency and regularity !" cries she with a sneer—" why, sirrah, does not my window look into your master's bed-chamber ? And did he not bring in a certain litty, such a day ?" describing you, madam.— " And did I not see——"

Mel. See ? O scandalous ! What ?

Sharp. Modesty requires my silence.

Mel. Did not you contradict her ?

Sharp. Contradict her ! Why I told her I was sure she lied : " for zounds !" said I, for I could not help swearing, " I am so well convinced of the lady's and my master's prudence, that I am sure, had they a mind to amuse themselves, they would certainly have drawn the window-curtains.

Mel. What, did you say nothing else ? Did not you convince her of her error and impertinence ?

Sharp. She swore to such things, that I could do nothing but swear and call names : upon which, out bolts her husband upon me, with a fine taper crab in his hand, and fell upon me with such violence, that being half delirious, I made a full confession.

Mel. A full confession ! What did you confess !

Sharp. That my master loved fornication ; that you had no aversion to it ; that Mrs. Kitty was a bawd, and your humble servant a pimp.

Kitty. A bawd ? a bawd ! Do I look like a bawd, madam ?

Sharp. And so, madam, in the scuffle, my coat as torn to pieces, as well as your reputation

Mel. And so you joined to make me 'infamous'!

Sharp. For heaven's sake, madam, what could I do? His proofs fell so thick upon me, as witness my head; (*shows his head, plastered*) that I would have given up all the reputations in the kingdom, rather than have my brains beat to a jelly.

Mel. Very well!—But I'll be revenged. And did not you tell your master of this?

Sharp. Tell him? No, madam. Had I told him, his love is so violent for you, that he would certainly have murdered half the attorneys in town by this time.

Me. Very well!—But I am resolved not to go to your master's to-night.

Sharp. Heavens and my impudence be praised! (*aside.*)

Kitty. Why not, madam? If you are not guilty, face your accusers.

Sharp. Oh, the devil! ruined again! (*aside.*) To be sure, face 'em by all means, madam; they can but be abusive, and break the windows a little. Besides madam, I have thought of a way to make this affair quite diverting to you; I have a fine blunderbuss, charged with half a hundred slugs, and my master has a delicate large Swiss broad-sword; and between us, madam, we shall so pepper and slice 'em, that you will die with laughing.

Mel. What, at murder?

Kitty. Don't fear, madam, there will be no murder if Sharp's concerned.

Sharp. Murder, madam! 'Tis self-defence; besides in these sort of skirmishes, there are never more than two or three killed; for, supposing they bring the whole body of militia upon us, I'll mow but with a brace of them, and away fly the rest of the covey.

Mel. Persuade me ever so much, I won't go; that's my resolution.

Kitty. Why then, I'll tell you what, madam; since you are resolved not to go to the supper, suppose the suppler was to come to you 'tis great pity such great preparations as Mr. Sharp has made should be thrown away.

Sharp. So it is, as you say, Mrs. Kitty; but I can immediately run back and unbespeak what I have ordered 'tis soon done.

Mel. But then what excuse can I send to your master? he'll be very uneasy at my not coming.

Sharp. Oh, terribly so!—But I have it; I'll tell him that you were suddenly taken with the vapours, or qualms, or what you please, madam.

Mel. I'll leave it to you, Sharp, to make my apology; and there's half-a-guinea for you to help your invention.

Sharp. Half-a-guinea!—'Tis so long since I had any thing to do with money, that I scarcely know the current coin of my own country. Oh, Sharp, what talents hast thou! to secure thy master, deceive his mistress, out-lie her chambermaid, and yet be paid for thy honesty!—But my joy will discover me. (*aside*) Madam, you have eternally fixed Timothy Sharp your obedient humble servant.—Oh, the delights of impudence and a good understanding!

(*aside and exit.*)

Kitty. Ha, ha, ha! Was there ever such a lying varlet! with his slugs and his broad-swords, his turnies and broken heads, and nonsense!—Well madam, are you satisfied now? Do you want more proof?

Mel. Of your modesty, I do; but I find you are resolved to give me none.

Kitty. Madam!

Mel. I see through your little mean artifice: you are endeavouring to lessen Mr. Gayless in my opinion, because he has not paid you for services he had no occasion for.

Kitty. Pay me, madam! I am sure I have very little occasion to be angry with Mr. Gayless for not paying me; when, I believe, 'tis his general practice.

Mel. 'Tis false! He's a gentleman, and a man of honour, and you are—

Kitty. Not in love, I thank heaven! ' (courtesies.

Mel. You are a fool.

Kitty. I have been in love, but I'm much wiser now.

Mel. Hold your tongue, impertinence!

Kitty. That's the severest thing she has said yet
(aside.

Mel. Leave me.

Kitty. Oh, this love, this love, is the devil! [exit.

Mel. We discover our weaknesses to our servants, make them our confidantes, put 'em on an equality with us, and so they become our advisers. Sharp's behaviour, though I seemed to disregard it, makes me tremble with apprehensions; and though I have pretended to be angry with Kitty for her advice, I think it of too much consequence to be neglected.

Re-enter Kitty.

Kitty. May I speak, madam?

Mel. Don't be a fool. What do you want?

Kitty. There is a servant, just come out of the country, says he belongs to sir William Gayless, and has got a letter for you from his master, upon very urgent business!

Mel. Sir William Gayless! What can this mean? Where is the man?

Kitty. In the little parlour, madam.

Mel. I'll go to him.—My heart flutters strangely.
[exit

Kitty. O woman, woman, foolish woman ! She'll certainly have this Gayless ! nay, were she as well convinced of his poverty as I am, she'd have him. Here is she going to throw away fifteen thousand pounds—upon what ? He's a man, and that's all ; and heaven knows, mere man is but small consolation now-a-days ! [exit.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Enter Gayless and Sharp.

Gay. Pr'ythee be serious, Sharp : hast thou really succeeded ?

Sharp. To our wishes, sir. In short, I have managed the business with such skill and dexterity, that neither your circumstances nor my veracity are suspected.

Gay. But how hast thou excused me from the ball and entertainment ?

Sharp. Beyond expectation, sir. But in that particular, I was obliged to have recourse to truth, and declare the real situation of your affairs. I told her we had so long disused ourselves to dressing either dinners or suppers, that I was afraid we should be but awkward in our preparations. In short, sir, at that instant a cursed gnawing seized my stomach, that I could not help telling her, that both you and myself seldom make a good meal now-a-days, once in a quarter of a year.

Gay. Hell and confusion ! have you betrayed me, villain ! Did you not tell me, this moment, she did not in the least suspect my circumstances ?

Sharp. No more she did, sir, till I told her

Gay. Very well!—And was this your skill and dexterity?

Sharp. I was going to tell you, but you won't hear reason. My melancholy face and piteous narration had such an effect upon her generous bowels, that she freely forgives all that's past.

Gay. Does she, Sharp?

Sharp. Yes, and desires never to see your face again; and, as a further consideration for so doing, she has sent you half-a-guinea. (*shows the money.*)

Gay. What do you mean?

Sharp. To spend it, spend it, sir, and regale.

Gay. Villain, you have undone me!

Sharp. What, by bringing you money, when you are not worth a farthing in the whole world? Well, well, then to make you happy again, I'll keep it myself; and wish somebody would take it in their head to load me with such misfortunes. (*puts up the money.*)

Gay. Do you laugh at me, rascal?

Sharp. Who deserves more to be laughed at? ha, ha, ha!—Never for the future, sir, dispute the success of my negotiations, when even you, who know me so well, can't help swallowing my hook. Why, sir, I could have played with you backwards and forwards at the end of my line till I had put your senses into such a fermentation, that you should not have known, in an hour's time, whether you was a fish or a man.

Gay. Why, what is all this you have been telling me?

Sharp. A downright lie from beginning to end.

Gay. And have you really excused me to her?

Sharp. No, sir; but I have got this half-guinea to make her excuses to you; and instead of a confederacy between you and me to deceive her, she thinks she has brought me over to put the deceit upon you.

Gay. Thou excellent fellow.

Sharp. Don't lose time, but slip out of the house immediately—the back way, I believe, will be the safest for you—and to her as fast as you can; pretend vast surprise and concern that her indisposition has debarred you the pleasure of her company here to-night. You need know no more—away!

Gay. But what shall we do, Sharp? Here's her maid again.

Sharp. The devil she is? I wish I could poison her: for I'm sure while she lives I can never prosper

• • *Enter Kitty.*

Kitty. Your door was open, so I did not stand upon ceremony. •

Gay. I am sorry to hear your mistress is taken so suddenly—

Kitty. Vapours, vapours only sir; a few matrimonial omens, that's all: but I suppose Mr. Sharp has made her excuses.

Gay. And tells me I can't have the pleasure of her company to-night. I had made a small preparation; but 'tis no matter: Sharp shall go to the rest of the company, and let them know 'tis put off.

Kitty. Not for the world, sir: my mistress was sensible you must have provided for her and the rest of the company; so she is resolved, though she can't. the other ladies and gentlemen shall partake of your entertainment.—She's very good natured.

Sharp. I had better run and let 'em know 'tis deferred. *(going.)*

• *Kitty.* *(stops him)* I have been with 'em already, and told 'em my mistress insists upon their coming; and they have already promised to be here: so pray don't be under any apprehensions that your preparations will be thrown away.

Gay. But as I can't have her company. *Mrs. Kitty*

town from France presently ; so I left word to send him here immediately, to make one.

Gay. You do me honour, madam.

Sharp. Do the ladies choose cards or supper first?

Gay. Supper ! What does the fellow mean? (*aside.*

Just. G. Oh; the supper, by all means ; for I have eat nothing to signify since dinner.

Sharp. Nor I, since last Monday was a fortnight.
(*aside.*

Gay. Pray ladies, walk into the next room.—*Sharp* get things ready for supper, and call the music.

Sharp. Well said, master.

Gay. Without ceremony, ladies.

[*exèunt Gayless, Trippet and Ladies.*

Kitty. I'll to my mistress ; and let her know every thing is ready for her appearance. [*aside and exit.*

Just. G. Pray Mr.—what's your name, don't be long with supper ;—but harkye, what can I do in the mean time ? suppose you get me a pipe and some good wine ; I'll try to divert myself that way till supper's ready.

Sharp. Or suppose, sir, you was to take a nap till then ; there's a very easy couch in that closet.

Just. G. The best thing in the world ! I'll take your advice ; but be sure to wake me when supper is ready. [*exit.*

Sharp. Pray heaven you may not wake till then !—What a fine situation my master is in at present ! I have promised him my assistance : but his affairs are in so desperate a way, that I am afraid 'tis out of my skill to recover them. Well, "Fools have fortune" says an old proverb, and a very true one it is ; for my master and I are two of the most unfortunate mortals in the creation.

Re-enter Gayless.

Gay. Well *Sharp*, I have set them down to cards and now what have you to propose ?

Sharp. I have one scheme left, which, in all probability may succeed. The good citizen, overloaded with his last meal, is taking a nap in that closet, in order to get him an appetite for yours. I'll pick his pocket, and provide us a supper with the booty.

Gay. Monstrous? for without considering the villainy of it, the danger of waking him makes it impracticable.

Sharp. If he wakes, I'll smother him, and lay his death to indigestion: a very common death among the justices.

Gay. Pr'ythee, be serious; we have no time to lose. Can you invent nothing to drive them out of the house?

Sharp. I can fire it.

Gay. Shame and confusion so perplex me, I cannot give myself a moment's thought.

Sharp. I have it; did not Mrs. Gadabout say her nephew would be here.

Gay. She did.

Sharp. Say no more, but in to your company. If I don't send them out of the house for the night, I'll at least frighten their stomachs away; and if this stratagem fails, I'll relinquish politics, and think my understanding no better than my neighbours.

Gay. How shall I reward thee, Sharp?

Sharp. By your silence and obedience. Away to your company, sir. [*exit Gayless*] Now, dear madam Fortune, for once open your eyes, and behold a poor unfortunate man of parts addressing you. Now is your time to convince your foes you are not that blind, whimsical whore they take you for; but let them see, by your assisting me, that men of sense as well as fools, are sometimes entitled to your favour and protection. (*goes aside and cries out*) Help! help! help, master! gentlemen, ladies! murder, fire, blimstone! help, help, help, help,

Mel. You are drunk fellow.

Sharp. I am undone, sir, but not drunk, I'll assure you.

Mel. What is all this?

Sharp. I'll tell you sir; a little while ago my master sent me out to change a note of twenty pounds; but I unfortunately hearing a noise in the street of "damme, sir?" and clashing of swords, and "ascal" and "murder!" I runs up to the place, and saw four men upon one; and having heard you was a mettlesome young gentleman, I immediately concluded it must be you; so ran back to call my master; and when I went to look for the note, to change it, I found it gone, either stole or lost; and if I don't get the money immediately, I shall certainly be turned out of my place, and lose my character.

Mel. I shall laugh in his face. (*aside*) Oh, I'll speak to your master about it, and he will forgive you at my intercession.

Sharp. Ah, sir! you don't know my master.

Mel. I'm very little acquainted with him, but I have heard he's a very good natured man.

Sharp. I have heard so too, but I have felt it otherwise: he has so much good nature, that if I could compound for one broken head a day, I should think myself very well off.

Mel. Are you serious, friend?

Sharp. Lookye, sir, I take you for a man of honour; there is something in your face that is generous, open, and masculine; you don't look like a foppish, effeminate tell-tale; so I'll venture to trust you. See here, sir, these are the effects of my master's good nature. (*shows his head.*)

Mel. Matchless impudence! (*aside*) Why do you live with him then, after such usage?

Sharp. He's worth a great deal of money, and

when he's drunk, which is commonly once a day, he's very free, and will give me any thing ! but I design to leave him when he's married, for all that.

Mel. Is he going to be married, then ?

Sharp. To-morrow, sir : and between you and I, he'll meet with his match, both for humour and something else too.

Mel. What, she drinks too ?

Sharp. Danbably, sir ; but pum You must know this entertainment was designed for madam to-night ; but she got so very gay after dinner, that she could not walk out of her own house ; so her maid, who was half gone too, came here with an excuse, that Mrs. Melissa had got the vapours ; and so she had indeed violently, here, here, sir. (*points to his head.*

Mel. This is scarcely to be borne (*aside*) Melissa ! I have heard of her : they say she's very whimsical.

Sharp. A very woman, and please your honour ; and between you and I, none of the mildest and wisest of her sex. But to return, sir, to the twenty pounds.

Mel. I am surprised, you, who have got so much money in his service, should be at a loss for twenty pounds, to save your bones at this juncture.

Sharp. I have put all my money out at interest ; I never keep above five pounds by me ; and if your honour would lend me the other fifteen, and take my note for it— (*a knocking.*

Mel. Somebody's at the door.

Sharp. I can give very good security. (*a knocking.*

Mel. Don't let the people wait, Mr. —

Sharp. Ten pounds will do. (*a knocking.*

Mel. Allez vous en.

Sharp. Five, sir. (*a knocking.*

Mel. Je ne puis pas.

Sharp. Je ne puis pas. I find ~~we~~ shan't under-

stand one another; I do but lose time; and if I had any thought, I might have known these young fops return from their travels generally with as little money as improvement. [exit.]

McL. Ha, ha, ha! What lies does this fellow invent, and what rogueries does he commit, for his master's service! There never sure was a more faithful servant to his master, or a greater rogue to the rest of mankind. But here he comes again. The plot thickens. I'll in and observe Gayless. [exit.]

Re-enter Sharp, before several persons with dishes in their hands, and a Cook, drunk.

Sharp Fortune, I thank thee; the most lucky accident! (*aside*) This way, gentlemen, this way.

Cook. I am afraid I have mistook the house. Is this Mr. Treatwell's?

Sharp. The same, the same. What, don't you know me?

Cook. Know you?—Are you sure there was a supper bespoke here?

Sharp. Yes; upon my honour, Mr. Cook: the company is in the next room, and must have gone without, had not you brought it. I'll draw a table. I see you have brought a cloth with you; but you need not have done that, for we have a very good stock of linen—at the pawnbroker's. [*aside, and exit; but returns immediately, drawing in a table*] Come, come, my boys, be quick. The company begin to be very uneasy; but I knew my old friend Lickspit here would not fail us.

Cook. Lickspit! I am no friend of yours, so I desire less familiarity.—Lickspit too!

Re-enter Gayless.

Gay. What is all this? (*apart to Sharp.*

Sharp. Sir, if the sight of the supper is offensive, I easily have it removed. (*apart.*

Gay. Pr'ythee explain thyself, Sharp. (*apart.*

Sharp. Some of our neighbours, I suppose, have bespoke this supper; but the cook has drank away his memory, forgot the house, and brodght it here however, sir, if you dislike it, I'll tell him of your mistake, and send him about his business. (*apart.*

Gay. Hold, hold, necessity obliges me against my inclination to favour the cheat, and feast at my neighbour's expense. (*apart.*

Cook. Hark you, friend, is that your master?

(*to Sharp*)

Sharp. Ay, and the best master in the world

Cook. I'll speak to him then.—Sir, I have, according to your commands, dressed as genteel a supper as my art and your price would admit of. (*to Gay*

Sharp. Good again, 'tis paid for.

(*apart to Gayless.*

Gay. I don't in the least question your abilities. Mr. Cook; and I am obliged to you for your care.

Cook. Sir you are a gentleman; and if you would but look over the bill, and approve it, you will over and above return the obligation (*pulls out a bill*

Sharp. Oh, the devil! (*aside.*

Gay. (*looks on the bill*) Very well, I'll send my man to pay you to-morrow.

Cook. I'll spare him that trouble, and take it with me, sir. I never work but for ready money.

Gay. Ha!

Sharp. Then you won't have our custom. (*aside*) My master is busy now, friend. Do you think he won't pay you?

Cook. No matter what I think; either my meat or my money.

Sharp. 'Twill be very ill-convenient for him to pay you to-night.

Cook. Then I'm afraid it will be ill-convenient to pay me to-morrow. so, d've hear

Re-enter Melissa

Gay. Pr'ythee be advised.—'Sdeath, I shall be discovered! *(takes the Cook aside.)*

Mel. What's the matter? *(to Sharp.)*

Sharp. The cook has not quite answered my master's expectations about the supper, sir, and he's a little angry at him; that's all.

Mel. Come, come, Mr. Gayless, don't be uneasy; a bachelor cannot be supposed to have things in the utmost regularity: we don't expect it.

Cook. But I do expect it, and will have it.

Mel. What does that drunken fool say.

Cook. That I will have my money, and I won't stay till to-morrow, and—ah—

Sharp. Hold, hold! what are you doing? Are you mad? *(runs and stops his mouth.)*

Mel. What do you stop the man's breath for?

Sharp. Sir, he was going to call you names.—Don't be abusive cook; the gentleman is a man of honour, and said nothing to you. Pray, be pacified. You are in liquor.

Cook. I will have my—

Sharp. *(still holding)* Why, I tell you, fool, you mistake the gentleman; he is a friend of my master's, and has not said a word to you.—Pray, good sir, go into the next room. The fellow's drunk, and takes you for another. *(to Melissa)* You'll repent this when you are sober, friend.—Pray, sir, don't stay to hear his impertinence.

Gay. Pray, sir, walk in. He's below your anger *(to Melissa)*

Mel. Damn the rascal! what does he mean by affronting me?—Let the scoundrel go; I'll punish his brutality, I warrant you. Here's the best reformer of manners in the universe *(draws his sword)* Let him go, I say.

Sharp. So, so, you have done finely now.—Get away as fast as you can. He's the most courageous, mettlesome man in all England. Why, if his passion was up, he could eat you.—Make your escape, you fool!

Cook. I won't.—Eat me! He'll find me damn'd hard of digestion, though.

Sharp. Pr'ythee come here! let me speak with you. *(takes Cook aside.)*

Re-enter Kitty.

Kitty. Gad! me! is supper on the table already?—Sir, pray defer it for a few minutes; my mistress is much better, and will be here immediately.

Gay. Will she indeed? Bless me, I did not expect—but however—*Sharp!*

Kitty. What success, madam? *(apart to Melissa.)*

Mel. As we could wish, girl: but he is in such pain and perplexity, I can't hold it out much longer.

Kitty. Ay, that not holding out is the ruin of half our sex.

Sharp. I have pacified the cook; and if you can but borrow twenty pieces of that young prig, all may go well yet. You may succeed, though I could not. Remember what I told you.—About it straight, sir. *(apart to Gayless.)*

Gay. Sir, sir, I beg to speak a word with you, *(to Melissa)* My servant, sir, tells me he has had the misfortune, sir, to lose a note of mine of twenty pounds, which I sent him to receive; and the bankers' shops being shut up, and having very little cash by me, I should be much obliged to you if you would favour me with twenty pieces till to-morrow.

Mel. Oh, sir, with all my heart; *(takes out her purse)* and as I have a small favour to beg of you, sir, the obligation will be mutual.

Gay. How may I oblige you, sir?

Mel. You are to be married, I hear, to Melissa:

Gay. To-morrow, sir.

Mel. Then you'll oblige me, sir, by never seeing her again.

Gay. Do you call this a small favour, sir?

Mel. A mere trifle, sir. Breaking of contracts, suing for divorces, committing adultery, and such like, are all reckoned trifles now-a-days, and smart young fellows, like you and myself, Gayless, should be never out of fashion.

Gay. But pray, sir, how are you concerned in this affair?

Mel. Oh, sir, you must know I have a very great regard for Melissa, and indeed she for me; and by the bye, I have a most despicable opinion of you; for, entre nous, I take you, Charles, to be a very great scoundrel.

Gay. Sir!

Mel. Nay, don't look fierce, sir, and give yourself airs—damme, sir, I shall be through your body else in the snapping of a finger.

Gay. I'll be as quick as you, villain!

(draws, and makes at Melissa)

Kitty. Hold, hold, murder! You'll kill my mistress—the young gentleman, I mean.

Gay. Ah! her mistress! *(drops his sword.)*

Sharp. How! Melissa! Nay, then drive away, cart; all's over now.

Enter all the Company laughing.

Mrs. G. What, Mr. Gayless, engaging with Melissa before your time? Ha, ha, ha!

Kitty. Your humble servant, good Mr. Polliciani.
(to Sharp) This is, gentlemen and ladies, the most celebrated and ingenious Timothy Sharp, schemer-general and redoubted squire to the most renowned

and fortunate adventurer, Charles Gayless, knight of the woful countenance—ha, ha, ha!—Oh, that dismal face, and more dismal head of yours. •

(strikes Sharp upon the head.)

Sharp. 'Tis cruel in you to disturb a man in his last agonies.

Mel. Now, Mr. Gayless!—What, not a word? You are sensible I can be no stranger to your misfortunes, and I might reasonably expect an excuse for your ill-treatment of me.

Gay. No, madam, silence is my only refuge: for to endeavour to vindicate my crimes, would show a greater want of virtue than even the commission of them.

Mel. Oh, Gayless! 'twas poor to impose upon a woman, and one that loved you too.

Gay. Oh, most unpardonable; but my necessities—

Sharp. And mine, madam, were not to be matched, I'm sure, o'this side starving.

Mel. His tears have softened me at once. (*aside*) Your necessities, Mr. Gayless, with such real contrition, are too powerful motives not to affect the breast already prejudiced in your favour.—You have suffered too much already for your extravagance; and as I take part in your sufferings, 'tis easing myself to relieve you: know, therefore, all that's past I freely forgive.

Gay. You cannot mean it, sure! I am lost in wonder!

Mel. Prepare yourself for more wonder. You are another friend in masquerade here. Mr. Cook, throw aside your drunkenness, and make your sober appearance.—Don't you know that face, sir?

Cook. Ay, master, what you have forgot your friend Dick, as you used to call me?

Gay. More wonder indeed ! Don't you live with my father ?

Mel. Just after your hopeful servant there had left me, comes this man from Sir William, with a letter to me ; upon which (being by that wholly convinced of your necessitous condition) I invented, by the help of Kitty and Mrs. Gadabout, this little plot, in which your friend Dick there has acted miracles, resolving to tease you a little, that you might have a greater relish for a happy turn in your affairs. Now, sir, read that letter, and complete your joy.

Gay. (*reads*) Madam, I am spibek to the unfortunate young man, who I hear by a friend of mine (that by my desire has been a continual spy upon him) is making his addresses to you. If he is so happy as to make himself agreeable to you, whose character I am charmed with, I shall own him with joy for my son, and forget his former follies.—I am, madam, your most humble servant,

WILLIAM GAYLESS.

P. S. I will be soon in town myself, to congratulate his reformation and marriage.

Oh, Melissa, this is too much ! Thus let me show my thanks and gratitude ; for here 'tis only due.

(*kneels ; she raises him.*)

Sharp. A reprieve ! a reprieve ! a reprieve !

Kitty. I have been, sir, a most bitter enemy to you ; but since you are likely to be a little more conversant with cash than you have been, I am now, with the greatest sincerity, your most obedient friend and humble servant.

Gay. Oh, Mrs. Pry, I have been too much indulged with forgiveness myself, not to forgive lesser offences in other people.

Sharp. Well, then, madam, since my master has purchased pardon to your handmaid Kitty, I hope you'll not deny it to his footman Timothy.

Mel. Pardon ! for what ?

Sharp. Only for telling you about ten thousand lies, madam; and, among the rest, insinuating that your ladyship would——

Mel. I understand you; and can forgive any thing, Sharp, that was designed for the service of your master; and if Pry and you will follow our example, I'll give her a small fortune, as a reward for both your fidelities.

Sharp. I fancy, madam, 'twould be better to have the small fortune between us, and keep us both single; for as we shall live in the same house, in all probability we may taste the comforts of matrimony, and not be troubled with its inconveniences. What say you, Kitty?

Kitty. Do you hear, Sharp? Before you talk of the comforts of matrimony, take the comforts of a good dinner, and recover your flesh a little; do, puppy.

Sharp. The devil backs her, that's certain; and I am no match for her at any weapon. *(aside.)*

Gay. Behold, Melissa, as sincere a convert as ever truth and beauty made. The wild, impetuous sallies of my youth are now blown over, and a most pleasing calm of perfect happiness succeeds.

Thus *Ætna's* flames the verdant earth consume,
But milder heat makes drooping nature bloom;
So virtuous love affords us springing joy.

Whilst vicious passions, as they burn, destroy. *[exunt.]*

THE END OF THE LYING VALET.

